1994

Acquisition of directives in first and second language: a review of the literature

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by

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A Thesis Submitted to the

Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department: English
Major: English (Teaching English as a Second Language/Linguistics)

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

1994

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In this paper I will review the literature of approximately the last ten years on the acquisition of directives in first language (L1) and second language (L2) learning. Two main questions are of interest in this study:

How do the patterns of development in the acquisition of directives by L1 and L2 learners compare?

How relevant are the similarities and differences? That is, what light can L1 acquisition research shed on L2 acquisition theory and practice?

Applied and theoretical linguists, anthropologists and ethnographers, cognitive psychologists, philosophers of language and researchers in child development approach the phenomenon of language from different vantage points. One avenue which has been explored in the area of teaching English as a second language (TESL) is the comparison of the acquisition processes of children learning their first language with those of learners of a second (or additional) language. Studies of this type have been conducted in the areas of syntax (e.g., Ervin-Tripp, 1974; Dulay and Burt, 1974, 1983) and phonology (Hecht and Mulford, 1987). There is some evidence for the existence of developmental trends in the acquisition of an L2 which share some features with those elaborated in L1 acquisition research. The picture is complicated by the many additional factors operating in the case of second language learning, and no predictive theory has emerged from these studies.

Nevertheless, such comparisons help explain certain phenomena, raise interesting research questions, and may be of use to the ESL teacher.

Since the mid-seventies attention to the concept of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) has fostered an interest in interactional language skills and their acquisition. As communication among speakers of English as both a first and second language becomes more common in an increasing variety of settings, the demands of social life and real language tasks call for more complete mastery of the subtleties of language usage. The sociocultural-cultural and pragmatic dimensions of language are increasingly seen as central to the needs of language learners. One area of social language explored by both L1 and L2 researchers is speech acts (Austin, 1962), i.e., those utterances with which we *do*, as well as *say*, something, such as directing, promising or apologizing. Many of these speech acts are commonly used and important to language learners; directives have been chosen for this review because there is sufficient work done on this speech act in first and second language acquisition to make an attempted comparison feasible.

Scarcella (1983) has made a beginning in expanding the developmental inquiry into the field of sociolinguistics, examining developmental trends in conversational competence in L2 learners, and commenting briefly on the parallels with L1 acquisition. More detailed and explicit comparisons of L1 and L2 research have been called for in the field of sociolinguistics (Kasper and Schmidt, 1992). We look to such comparisons for insights into the processes of language acquisition, both to inform theory and to facilitate teaching. This thesis will present a literature review of L1 and L2 research on directives as a contribution to this research agenda.

Comparisons of L1 and L2 Acquisition

In searching for models of language learning, language researchers have been fascinated by the fact that virtually all children acquire full mastery of their native language. Although this process appears effortless, research on child language shows it to be complex and relatively demanding. In searching for insights into the processes of second language learning, it seems natural to look to this ubiquitous example of success. In 1974, *TESOL Quarterly* published two papers on comparisons of first and second language acquisition in children. Susan Ervin-Tripp's "Is second language learning like the first?" undertook to bridge the gap between the theoretical, largely case study work on the natural acquisition of language by children and the more applied, large group work on the learning of second languages. She found that similar processes are at work in both situations, although age plays a role in the rate at which they operate. Dulay and Burt's "Errors and strategies in child second language acquisition" attempted to separate the errors children make as L2 learners into two groups: those due to the same "creative construction process" which functions in L1 acquisition and those caused by interference, or transfer, from the native language. They found that a very large percentage of the non-ambiguous errors made by children learning English as a second language were like those made by children learning it as a first language, while only a very small percentage could be explained by transfer from the native language. This discovery held out the possibility of explaining errors not accounted for by the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Lado,

1957) which sought to predict and explain difficulties in language acquisition by describing the similarities and differences between the learner's L1 and L2.

From this point in the 1970s, several other studies have been done on the comparison of first and second language acquisition, expanding on Ervin-Tripp's and Dulay and Burt's work in the area of syntax and moving into the area of phonology as well (e.g., Hecht and Mulford, 1987). Like these two landmark works, some of the subsequent studies have dealt with children learning an L2 and have shown moderate support for the importance of developmental factors; a more confused picture has emerged with adult subjects, perhaps because of their greater linguistic and social experience. Nevertheless, this avenue of inquiry has yielded material for reflection; while its results are not strongly predictive, they have shed some light on phenomena not explained by previous theories.

Speech Acts

Speech acts have been an object of study in the fields of philosophy and linguistics for over thirty years. Virtually all accounts of this type of utterance cite Austin's 1962 work, *How to Do Things with Words*, as setting speech acts apart from other utterances in that they are used to *do* as well as to *say* something, and are therefore not amenable to the same traditional analyses of truth-conditions as propositional statements. Austin analyzed an utterance into a *locutionary act* which can be contrasted with the *illocutionary* act and the *perlocutionary* act which may be performed by making the same utterance.

Example:

Utterance:	"Can you pass the salt?"	(Locutionary act, what is said)
	I request that you pass me the salt	(Illocutionary act, what is done)
	[You pass the salt to me.]	(Perlocutionary force, result)

Conventionally, this utterance could be used with the perlocutionary force (intended effect) shown above. It might, however, have a different perlocutionary effect: the respondent might reply, "No, I can't," if the salt is too far away, or "Get your own salt," if angry at the speaker. Speech acts include such everyday phenomena as requesting, promising, forbidding and suggesting, as well as less common events such as marrying and excommunicating. They have a heavy component of conditions on the speaker and hearer for their appropriate use and require extensive social and cultural knowledge for both use and interpretation. Knowing that the above exchange marks a conventional request is required both to respond politely (pass the salt) and to send an angry message.

For philosophers of language, speech acts pose questions about the relation of language, meaning and action. For language learners and teachers, they form a vital part of the language of social interaction. Their complexity makes them interesting and potentially difficult, as their appropriate interpretation and use require extra-linguistic knowledge.

My focus in this thesis is on the acquisition of one type of speech act: directives. In the literature reviewed .here, the terms *directive* and *request* are used virtually interchangeably. Another term sometimes used is *control act*, and this provides perhaps the most complete and accurate idea of the speech act. A directive, request, or control act is something we say in order to get our hearer(s) to do what we want them to. Directives can be modified internally, for example, by syntactic features such as tense or modality, or externally, for example, by the inclusion of explanations of need or promises of repayment. In addition, directives can be aggravated (strengthened) or mitigated (softened) by the alteration, inclusion or omission of such features as tone of voice, politeness markers such as please, or non-verbal cues such as gestures and body language. In analyzing directives, two other factors to consider are cost and resistance. The cost of a request is the difficulty it poses for the hearer; the perceived cost will influence the way in which the request is made. Likewise, if the speaker expects the hearer to resist or refuse the request, this will influence the speaker's choice of request strategy, and subsequent modifications in the request may be made in response to initial resistance or refusal by the hearer.

Speech acts lend themselves to language acquisition research because they are common, necessary and relatively easy to recognize. They have also been the objects of study in other fields, as noted above; there is thus a substantial body of general research available. In this paper, speech acts will be dealt with in their simplest and most transparent forms. While passing reference will be made to work in linguistics and philosophy which may shed some light on the points which are central to this paper, it is

not my intent to provide a cross-disciplinary treatment of the subject of speech acts. My focus is on the theoretical and practical repercussions of research findings on speech act acquisition in the ESL field.

Pragmatics

Speech acts form part of the field of pragmatics, which also has theoretical and applied approaches. Its concern is with the contextual aspects of human interaction; from this standpoint it is difficult to find any definition which is both sufficiently inclusive and sufficiently informative. As a starting point for the definition of pragmatics, Levinson (1983) suggests this expansion of an earlier formulation by Carnap: " 'those linguistic investigations that make necessary reference to aspects of the context,' where the term **context** is understood to cover the identities of the participants, the temporal and spatial parameters of the speech event, and ... the beliefs, knowledge and intentions of the participants in that speech event, and no doubt much besides (page 5)."

Probably the most important area of pragmatics dealt with in the studies included here, whether explicitly or not, is politeness theory. Most work in this area in theoretical and applied linguistics is based on the Cooperative Principle and accompanying conversational maxims of Grice (1975) and the descriptions of face by Brown and Levinson (1978). Grice articulated the Cooperative Principle on which conversations operate: participants in a conversation cooperate to make the conversation work. He also suggested conversational maxims of quantity (say enough but not too much); quality

(make genuine contributions to the conversation); relation (make relevant contributions); and manner (make clear, efficient contributions). Since the Cooperative Principle is assumed by all parties, the conversational maxims based on it can be used in the breach to communicate, or imply, something more than, or other than, what is said. Brown and Levinson developed their politeness theory to explain the social purposes and effects of certain aspects of conversation. It is based on the concepts of positive and negative face needs shared by all people. Our positive face needs require approval for ourselves and what we value, while our negative face needs concern our desire for autonomy and freedom from coercion. People's *face* can be threatened by conversational features which impose on their time, space or freedom of action; it can be saved by redressive features, such as politeness markers, which acknowledge the imposition and the optionality of compliance. These underlying features of conversations are so fundamental and pervasive that they form part of the background of almost all studies in social language. For this investigation the most important elements of Levinson's definition quoted above are the identities of the participants and the relationships existing among them. Such factors as age, gender, status and social distance are commonly investigated variables in studies in this field, in both L1 and L2.

Understanding the pragmatic elements in a communicative situation is essential to the achievement of what Hymes called *communicative competence* (Hymes, 1972). This concept has been enormously influential in the field of language education, expanding the objectives of language teaching and learning beyond accurate phonology and correct

syntax to successful communication in real speech situations. It is a commonplace to say that every such speech situation has a context, and yet attention to this factor may be delayed or ignored in language teaching in order to accomplish what may seem like more fundamental linguistic goals, such as grammatical rules, correct pronunciation and even decontextualized functional formulas. Paralleling the interest in communicative competence in the field of language teaching, research in the field of first language acquisition has also attended to the patterns of development surrounding children's abilities to manipulate speech acts such as directives, which are important linguistic and social behaviors, in various contexts. The emphasis on communicative competence which has dominated the language field for the last twenty years has been the impetus for much of the language acquisition work reviewed in this paper.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to review the literature of about the last decade on the acquisition of directives in first and second language, to make whatever comparisons are possible based on the nature of the findings, and to comment on the implications for teaching and future research. The remainder of the thesis is organized into four chapters. Chapters Two and Three will present major issues and findings in the acquisition of directives in L1 and L2 respectively. Chapter Four will compare these findings and Chapter Five will critique current research methods, discuss the pedagogical implications of this research in the ESL field and suggest future research directions.

CHAPTER 2

THE ACQUISITION OF DIRECTIVES IN FIRST LANGUAGE

Introduction

This chapter is a review of representative literature on the acquisition of directives by children in their first language. The introduction includes some background on the history of research in this area and on request behavior, politeness and indirectness. This is followed by two main points: the development of polite requests and the sources of children's knowledge of requests.

Research in Pragmatics in Child Language

Interest in pragmatics and conversational analysis increased in the 1970s, in both linguistics and child language (e.g. Bruner 1975, Ervin-Tripp 1974, 1977). Emphasis on the social nature of language followed Hymes's (1972) proposal of *communicative* competence as the distinguishing characteristic of language ability. The individual's ability to accomplish the goals and functions of language use was seen as fundamental to the development of Chomsky's *grammatical* competence (1965) which was at the heart of the "linguistic revolution" of the 1960s. The expansion of the study of language to include its purposes and effects was a reaction, in part, to the structuralist viewpoint which placed primary importance on explaining the acquisition of syntax (McTear 1985, Foster 1990).

This movement beyond syntax, and even beyond grammar in the broadest sense (including phonology, morphology, semantics and the lexicon) parallels the development of speech act theory in linguistic philosophy a decade earlier. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) developed and refined taxonomies of utterance types based on the speaker *intentions* they expressed and the *effects* they accomplished rather than on criteria of meaning or reference. For example, discussion of the truth value of statements such as "The king of France is dead" might include such considerations as the non-existence of the subject: Did the term have a referent? Could a statement about a non-existent referent be false? Did that imply the possibility of its being true? And so on. Speech act theorists raised the question of altogether different types of utterances, which did not *mean* something so much as *do* something. Examples include directives (Please close the window.), commissives (I promise to pay you tomorrow.), performatives (I apologize for being late.) and executives (I now pronounce you man and wife).

The concept of communicative competence led to an increased interest in child language at the discourse or conversation level (McTear, 1985). The inclusion of many additional linguistic and non-linguistic features provides a more complete picture of the communicative event taking place than syntactic or semantic analyses alone can. Examples of non-linguistic features include physical context and social relationships among participants, while linguistic features might include deictic terms, i.e., terms which depend on a specific aspects of the context for their meaning, such as *here* and *this one*, and anaphoric terms, i.e., terms which refer to something previously mentioned, such as

pronouns. Dore (1979) and Ochs, Schieffelin and Platt (1979), for example, suggest the conversational proposition or act, which may require several turns, as a more productive unit of analysis than the utterance. This interest in the interactional aspects of language use linked children's linguistic and social development from a pre-linguistic but communicatively active stage through well-documented stages of acquisition to full use of their native language.

Request Behavior, Politeness and Indirectness

There are two aspects to the development of requests: children must learn both the various linguistic forms which can be used to make requests and the social rules governing their appropriate use (Ervin-Tripp 1977, Axia and Baroni 1985). Linguistic forms include direct imperatives, questions with modals, terms used to modify requests and indirect hints. Social rules include when and to whom it is appropriate to make requests and the degree of politeness required by the addressee and the type of request. Of course, both production and recognition of appropriate forms and circumstances is required.

While there are several taxonomies of directives, three main types have been recognized cross-culturally (see, for example, Blum-Kulka, 1987): the direct, or imperative form, the conventionally indirect form, using syntactic markers such as interrogative form and semantic markers such as *please*, and the unconventionally indirect form, or hint. The imperative form is what Brown and Levinson (1978) would call a bald, on-record request: there is no way to even pretend it is anything but a request and it

requires something of the addressee. The use of interrogative forms, modal verbs and mitigators such as *please, perhaps,* and *possibly* produce directives which are usually more polite than the imperative forms. These forms have become conventionally polite in English; they recognize and repair the imposition constituted by the request. Less conventional indirect hints ("It's cold in here." or "Is the window open?" as hints to close the window) allow more possibility for the hearer not to grant the request, i.e., not to take the hint, and by Brown and Levinson's (1978) commonly used standards should be considered the most polite of the three types. There are other features which are used to mitigate or aggravate requests, that is, to make them weaker or stronger. An even, aggravated or whiny tone of voice, for example, can change the perceived politeness and the effectiveness of requests. In addition, every situation includes certain expectations on the part of the participants, based on their relationships and prior experience. Violations of these expectations may be perceived as impolite, even if the speaker uses a more polite form than expected (Ervin-Tripp, 1976). Ervin-Tripp (1977) found that for low-cost requests, simple, explicit direct requests produced the best results, i.e., the most compliance. How the request form fits the situation appears to be very important in judging its success. Context plays a large part in establishing the expectations, and thus the choices, of speakers, and even in their assessment of politeness in request behavior.

There is a (sometimes unstated) equation of indirectness with politeness in several studies considered here, which is the focus of some differences in findings among researchers. Ervin-Tripp (1977) and Garvey (1975) in studies of children up to age nine,

found indirectness increased with age, while Levin and Rubin (1983) found an approximately equal fraction of indirect requests across ages (preschool through third grade). Does this mean the children were more or less polite than those in the earlier studies? This may be an artifact of the research design using same-age dyads, reflecting the same level politeness among peers as Wolfson (1988) observed in her study of compliments among adults. Non-intimate peers received more tokens of behaviors considered conventionally polite than those at a greater or smaller social distance. Ervin-Tripp (1977) found that politeness markers were likelier to appear in the speech of younger to older children; using only same-age dyads would obscure this phenomenon.

It may also be that indirectness is not really equivalent to politeness. Ervin-Tripp (1985) has pointed out the different values accorded directness, among other features, across cultures. For example, "the Malagasy do not give information freely when it is solicited, since if it is unavailable it is valued highly" (48). In this setting, requesting and giving information are therefore very different social interactions than in a society in which information is customarily shared, or one in which a straightforward answer is considered a sign of trustworthiness. Likewise, Blum-Kulka (1987) presents evidence that native speakers of both Hebrew and English differentiate the qualities of indirectness and politeness. While not agreeing in every detail, both groups judged direct imperatives to be less polite than conventionally indirect requests, but did not judge the least direct forms, hints, to be the most polite. These findings present a clear challenge to the equation of indirectness with politeness based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, and what

Ervin-Tripp (1985) characterizes as the introspective (rather than empirical) source of many speech act generalizations.

Development of Request Behavior

> What can child language contribute to an understanding of language in context? The study of child language provides at least the following five resources:
>
> 1. A multidisciplinary research base
> 2. A methodology strongly grounded in empirical observation
> 3. The opportunity to observe the emergence of contextual sensitivity
> 4. The opportunity to observe the transition from context to syntax (contextual precursors of syntax, syntactic encoding of context)
> 5. The opportunity to observe the socialization of background knowledge essential to the use of language (i.e., the role of the caregiver). (Ochs 1979, 6)

The observations mentioned in the last three points above will be used to structure this summary of the acquisition of directives; the first two will appear again in the comments on research methods (Chapter 5). I propose matching the Ochs observations to stages and aspects of the development of directives.

Children acquire many of the forms used to make requests at an early age; this acquisition continues through pre-adolescence, and control of indirect strategies increases with age. Bates (1976) lays out three stages in the development of children's mastery of requests. Under four years of age, most requests are direct, using imperative forms or want/need statements (such as, I want a cookie.), while six-year-olds can produce most of the linguistic forms used to make requests and can produce conventionally polite requests.

They cannot yet, however "mask" the content of their requests. (Of course, it would be counterproductive to mask the content of a request completely, but adults are able to redress the threat to the hearer's negative face needs which requests pose.) By eight or nine years of age, children can vary the form and content of directives to produce indirect requests. This framework has been basically upheld and substantially augmented by further research described in this chapter.

Acquiring the Linguistic Forms of Directives

This chronology of language development shows the primacy of action and intention in early child language. Its order is the reverse of the usual order of description of speech acts given in the previous chapter, locution, illocution, perlocution, which reflects linguists' and philosophers' interest in the analysis of language. Locution is the utterance itself and presupposes mastery of language which infants do not have. This does not mean that they do not have and communicate intentions; while lacking locutionary form, their prelinguistic signals have illocutionary force. And it is suggested (Bruner 1974) that the development of this early purposeful communication grows out of the infants' observations that their actions have effects, or perlocutions. Bates, Camaioni and Volterra (1979) describe the stages of prelinguistic performative development as the perlocutionary, illocutionary and locutionary phases. They make quite a strong statement of the connection between language development and the child's environment: ". . .in Piagetian terms, the performative is first carried out on the plane of action (125)". This

marks the "emergence of contextual sensitivity" to which Ochs refers (1979). While some areas of language study are best served by an analysis beginning with the locution, investigations of how individuals develop language ability will suffer from inattention to context.

Jerome Bruner (1974) believes speech acts begin in the first months of life. As babies experience the effects their actions have on the world around them and on the behavior of people in that world, they develop an awareness of perlocutionary effects. This comes about largely because caregivers attribute intentionality to infant behavior and respond to it accordingly. Adults provide not only what they see children need, but what they think they want and have "asked for" (Bates et al. 1979, Dore 1979). This assumption about infant behavior is noted throughout the literature. In their textbook summary, Warren and McCloskey (1993) note that "the habit among caretakers in many cultures to treat their infants as intentional, regardless of their ability to coordinate means and ends may be the **bootstrap** enabling children to develop intentional structures of the mind, voice, and hands (200)". This provides the baby with the link between behavior and effect which leads to the next, or illocutionary stage. In this stage, children begin to perceive the people, objects and events around them as having characteristics and causes beyond themselves. Key behaviors include the use of adults to get objects, the use of objects to get adult attention, and the shift from self-directed to other-directed behaviors such as pointing (Bates et al 1979). The emergence of "protoimperatives" (120) during this stage is just a part of children's cognitive, social and linguistic development of

interactive behavior. The move into spoken language is a gradual and logical extension of this interaction with significant people and objects. As children acquire spoken language, they can produce locutions, but their limited proficiency sometimes makes it difficult to identify their intentions. When a child in the one word stage, for example, produces the word apple, does this mean *Give me some apple, I like apples, There's an apple, I had an apple yesterday* or any number of other possibilities? There is no way to distinguish whether the word is a topic or a comment, nor can the child mark the speech act as a request as such, or use referring terms or time markers, for example. Golinkoff (1986) observed mothers and children working hard to create successful request exchanges.

Shared experience often provides essential clues to meaning, illustrating once again the importance of the total context in which an utterance is made. Snow (1976, cited in Dore 1979) observed the following exchange between an experimenter (E) and an eighteen-month-old child (C):

C:. Band-Aid.
E: Where's your Band-Aid?
C: Band-Aid.
E: Do you have a Band-Aid?
C: Band-Aid.
E: Did you fall down and hurt yourself?
[Mother enters]
C: Band-Aid.
M: Who gave you the Band-Aid?
C: Nurse.
M: Where did she put it?
C: Arm.

[This was followed by an extensive conversation about a visit to the doctor.]

The shared experience of the visit and subsequent discussions of it are prerequisites of the mother-child conversation. Context, both the immediate physical and social context and the context of the child's experience, remains an important factor throughout language development. This exchange reveals comprehension and production abilities the experimenter might never have known the child had without the fortuitous arrival of the mother. It also reveals the limitations of examining language in limited contexts and the challenge of designing research to assess real competence. Through this period we see the "transition from context to syntax" that Ochs (1979) mentions.

Within a relatively short time, before the age of four, children learn several linguistic forms for making requests. Although the direct imperative shows a high frequency in the early years, young children show an ability to recognize different addressees by using different formal features such as politeness markers (e.g., *please*). By the time they start school at five or six, most children have an adequate repertoire of request forms at their disposal, including direct forms (Do it.), imperatives marked for politeness (Please do it.), and conventional indirect form (Could/would you do it? May I have it?), as well as several means of modifying their requests such as vocatives or tone of voice. As their experience increases, they become adept at using both the form and the content of their requests to achieve success, and show some ability to alter requests appropriately in response to resistance.

Children of about nine years and over show increased awareness of other points of view which enables them to interpret requests more successfully and assess cost and

respond to resistance better when making their own requests. They also show explicit awareness of the relationship between social relationships and linguistic forms. By eleven years, children combine sensitivity to addressee, cost and resistance, mastery of linguistic forms and a more sophisticated social sense to produce and interpret a wide variety of requests. These developments mark the "socialization of contextual information", or knowing who's supposed to do what, that Ochs (1979) mentioned, which is the subject of the next section.

Acquiring the Social Rules for Directives

In addition to developing an increasing ability to use many request forms correctly and effectively, children show clear development in the socially appropriate choice of such features as polite syntactic structures, mitigated and aggravated voice, and internal and external modification and repairs. Becker (1986) suggests that "to the extent that the production and interpretation of requests depends in part on grammatical acquisition, cognitive development and social experience...knowledge of request usage should change with age" (396).

In general, child language studies suggest that children's ability to use more indirect and sophisticated requests forms increases with age. If we assume adult behavior to be the ultimate end-point to which children's behavior is tending, then there seems to be some evidence for a generally rising pattern of appropriately-used polite forms. Camras Pristo and Brown (1975) elicited directives from 60 first grade children and sixty adults

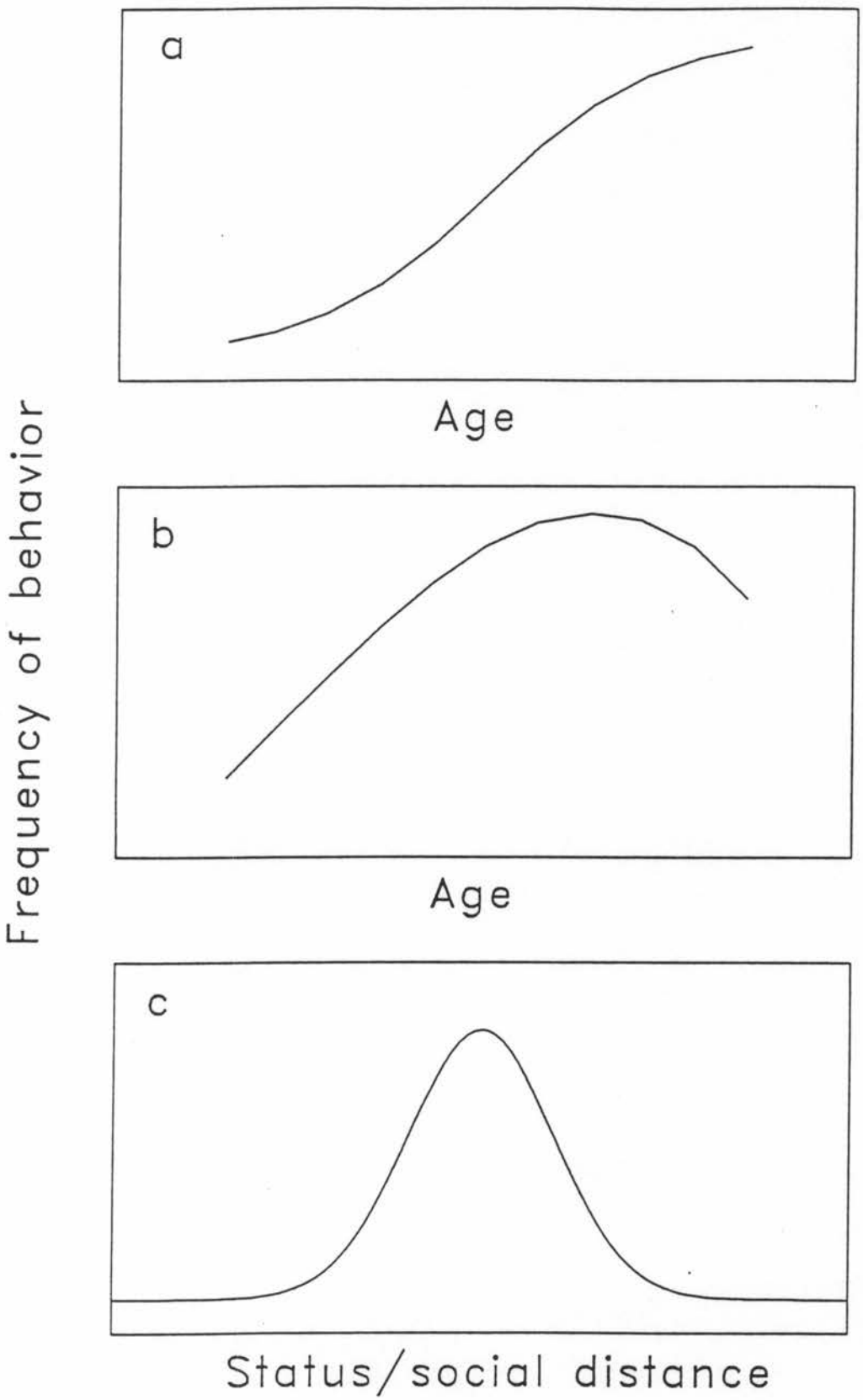
using stories with happy, angry and neutral characters. While both children and adults followed the expected pattern of producing more direct imperatives for angry speakers, the children's majority was much larger than the adults (90% vs. 55%). Axia and Baroni (1985) investigated how Italian children use the knowledge they have to overcome resistance to requests in their hearers and to identify social relationships by the use of more or less polite requests by characters in pictures. In the first of these experiments they introduced "experimental variables" into a natural speech situation by structuring activities during which children would need things from an adult and then varying the adult interlocutor's level of resistance to requests and the cost of the requests. They found that while six-year olds can produce indirect requests, effective response to resistance was characteristic only of somewhat older children: "children master polite register to overcome difficulties in natural interaction at about the age of nine ...they can grade linguistic politeness according to the type of resistance to satisfy an interlocutor (923)." This gap between six and nine years may be attributable to the need for sociocognitive development which enables children to combine "evaluation of feedback" with their "inventory of polite sentences (924)."

While they find an overall pattern of increasing politeness with age, Ervin-Tripp et al., (1990) showed a slightly more complex pattern in older (school age) children. The increase in politeness falls off as children move through the elementary years. This might be expected as they approach the final stage of request development; they may simply have less to learn. As children come closer to adult behavior, the change in their behavior

will decrease. This phenomenon is illustrated in a standard learning graph or "S" curve (Fig. 1a). Or children may be over generalizing, learning and applying politeness forms widely and later fine-tuning their language to fit specific situations (Fig. 1b). Another interesting observation in this study was that increased politeness did not result in increased compliance by adults. We cannot look to positive results, then as an explanation for increasing politeness with age. In fact, politeness declines as children approach the end of the elementary years.

However, there is a relationship between politeness of the speaker and age of the hearer evident in conversations with other children: politeness increased compliance by near-age peers and older children, while aggravated voice was effective toward younger children, and direct, simple requests were most effective toward adults (Ervin-Tripp et al. 1990). Here again, we see what appears to be a normal distribution, rather than a linear, relationship between use of conventional politeness and social distance of the hearer, in this case shown by age. It may be that, as Wolfson (1988) hypothesized about the "bulge" she observed in compliment behavior, (see Fig. 1c), politeness is likelier to be directed toward those with whom our relationships are being negotiated. For school age children, this would not include parents or younger siblings. On the whole, children show greater politeness to researchers in lab situations, as adults with whom a relationship was being established, than to parents at home, as adults with whom they have a stable relationship.

Fig. 1. Curves showing patterns of politeness acquisition and behavior in children


a
Age
b
Age
c
Frequency of behavior
Status/social distance

Alternatively, the observation of declining politeness in older school age children may also be an artifact of the sample: those in the upper age range may have had fewer peers and/or older children to interact with.

Another important factor in the social aspect of children's directives is expectation. Generally, Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984) state, "less deference is required when compliance is expected." This is illustrated by the fact that American children often use more imperatives to their mothers than to other adults. Trust in the response of caregivers is strongly involved in the successful development of requests: if the culture at large or individual mothers do not demand signs of respect, the assumption of their compliance is shown in the continued use of unmarked directives. Likewise, Ervin-Tripp and Gordon (1986) suggest that requests that are expected, or that the speaker thinks are expected, do not need as much explicit marking as unexpected requests. Between the ages of four and eight children show increased ability to tailor their requests to their assumptions about hearer expectations. R. Lakoff's (1975) conversational strictures to be clear and be polite become more important as the hearer's expectation that a request will occur and the speaker's expectation that the hearer will comply decrease. These expectations form part of the context in which the request occurs.

Expectations are at work in the perception of requests as well. Directives which violate the expectations of the hearer may be perceived as rude, even if they are more conventionally polite or less direct that expected. For example, Fraser (1990) cites Garfinkel's experiment in the 1970s in which he told his students to go home and be very

polite to their families: they reported negative reactions to this unexpected behavior which was perceived as rude. Ervin-Tripp (1976) suggests that the context of requests, particularly shared cultural knowledge, determines these expectations, and that "to interpret the affective significance of the directives, one must compare the expected and realized forms (25)." Politeness, then, is not a matter of a *particular* form, but of an *appropriate* form for the context.

Gender Differences in the Use of Directives

Sachs (1987) comments on the dearth of empirical studies in which gender is a variable. This does appear to be an area in which more work needs to be done, as the literature is sparse and contradictory. According to Becker (1986), "although a number of theorists have suggested that there should be sex differences in pragmatic behavior [among children], virtually no empirical data support their conclusions (412)." She presents an analysis of her own data on children's ability to produce and recognize bossy and nice requests, as well as reviewing other literature, to support her claim. Sachs (1987), however, found that preschool girls used softer "obliges" (utterances demanding some kind of response, including directives) than boys did in same-sex play dyads, and that this finding was not vitiated by the possible explanation of girls' earlier development of language skills. Boys, in fact, exhibited the ability to produce softer obliges on occasion, but showed a lower frequency of such behavior overall than girls. Goodwin (1980) and Goodwin and Goodwin (1987) likewise found a clear difference in the use of

several features of language including speech acts, and specifically directives, by 8- to 13-year-old children in Philadelphia. Girls used language that created more solidarity and showed higher frequency of mitigation and indirectness than the boys, whose language was more direct and aggressive overall. However, each group also showed command of the whole continuum of aggressive through deferential behavior on certain occasions. In a naturalistic study of three-year-olds in two same sex triads (one female, one male), Sheldon (1990) found girls' dispute strategies were more "mitigated" and "collaborative" while boys' were more "heavy-handed" and "controlling" (5).

Becker herself (1986), in the elicitation of bossy and nice requests, speculates that "subtle sex differences (may) have been masked by more powerful task characteristics and situations that call for constrained, ritualized responses (412)," and in a later naturalistic study comments "data from constrained laboratory studies tell us what rules children know. More naturalistic data tell us how children use this knowledge linguistically and socially (12)." In fact, the naturalistic or ethnographic studies show *both* gender differences in preferential use or style of language between males and females *and* knowledge of most forms by most speakers. If Becker is right, if experimental studies do tend to show what children know versus how they use what they know, then the fact that gender differences do not show up there should not be surprising. Naturalistic and experimental data both support the mastery of a wide range of language forms and social rules by girls and boys. Naturalistic data also show gender differences in patterns of language use.

One problem with gender differences that show up in naturalistic data is that the children exhibiting different kinds of language are engaged in different kinds of activities. Since boys and girls are often doing different things as well as using different language, separating situation from gender is difficult (Sheldon 1990). Once again we encounter the essential relationship of language and behavior. Goodwin (1980) points out that certain types of language both reflected and created the social organization of the groups she observed: the relationship between language and context is reciprocal and recursive.

Sources of Children's Knowledge

The summary of sources of children's knowledge draws from work in infant development (e.g., Bruner 1974), from studies that elicited children's knowledge of language (e.g., Axia and Baroni, 1985), and from studies of authentic conversation (Snow, Perlmann, Gleason and Hooshyar, 1990). Both of the latter two groups of studies include reports and analyses of children's metapragmatic comments, that is, comments about pragmatic rules.

What are the "sources of children's knowledge" of speech acts? (Snow et al. 1990). Several factors operate to enable children to express intention as they develop the linguistic and social skills that lead to full pragmatic competence. The action or activity in which the language is grounded, and indeed the context generally, is of primary importance, while the teaching of routines, play, and child directed speech are also major

influences. Finally, children exercise and develop their metapragmatic awareness in all language learning activities.

Action Context

For preverbal and young children, action almost always precedes/accompanies speech and conveys a larger or smaller part of the message. This is not action as a supplement to imperfect language, but the situation out of which the language will grow. It is important to note both the organic relationship of action and language and the prior place of action. The context often requires very little speech: a gesture and an inquiring look can function as well as a verbal request (see, for example, several of the studies in Ochs and Schieffelin (1979) for paralinguistic features of infant and child communication). Linking actions with the speech that grows from them is part of learning how to use "speech-acts."

Even after speech is well developed, concomitant activity and context are important in children's understanding of requests. Reeder and Wakefield (1987) suggest that as children mature and become linguistically more sophisticated, they shift from a context- to a text-based interpretation of directives. These authors place this shift at about 3 to 4 years of age. But Ervin-Tripp et al (1987) found that compliance decreased as explicitness of requests decreased, which may show a more important role for "text" even among young children. This trend held throughout the preschool and early elementary years, and, in fact, was most marked in the youngest children. Ervin-Tripp et al. did find,

however, that surprisingly little language at all was needed. "Degree of explicitness did relate to the likelihood of cooperation. It is not a negligible effect, but what we found is that contextual information is enough to do the work alone in many cases (141)." This study testing language-based versus context-based models of request interpretation included a comparison of children who were native speakers of French with native-speaking English children learning French in Switzerland. The authors hypothesized that if request interpretation were primarily a linguistic analysis task, then non-native speakers should be at a disadvantage. In fact, the learners were more cooperative than the native speakers, and the difference was greatest for the least explicit requests, or hints.

There appear to be two roles for context here: one which limits younger children, who are more context-dependent and less text-dependent than older children, and the other which provides usable input for older children's interpretation of requests. Ervin-Tripp et al. postulate "pragmatic knowledge" as the opposite of linguistic knowledge, and this would increase with age. They found, in fact, that as children got older they were more likely to respond to indirect requests. The learners relied more on context and so "cooperated" more compared with native speakers of both English and French. They had similar pragmatic knowledge and less linguistic knowledge, and so would be less likely to be making the kind of inferences a language-based model of request interpretation requires. On the other hand, they differentiated less among the different levels of requests, responding approximately the same to simple mentions ("Oh, my ___!") as to a stronger problem statement ("I can't reach my ___.") Frequency of response for native speakers of

both English and French respectively was .20 to .27 for the first and .47 and .44 for the second, showing more discrimination. At the level of the conventional request ("Can you give me my ___?") natives and learners converged much more closely. While this points up the importance of context in conveying and interpreting requests, it also shows the role of linguistic sophistication in fine tuning responses. It appears that pragmatic knowledge, immediate context and linguistic development work together: In the same situation, younger children need more explicitness than older children, while learners matched for age will use their pragmatic knowledge to compensate for linguistic knowledge, resulting in high frequency of cooperation but less discrimination of response. Ervin-Tripp et al. have made their point that the interpretation of requests is probably not a complex linguistic analysis of an utterance, but a response to a situation with several contextual variables including age (experience) and linguistic development.

Teaching Routines

Routine is also an important part of learning requests. Snow et al. (1990) found parents structure opportunities for their children to use and observe polite forms. For example, they created situations in which power relationships differed and asked children for real favors, which were optional, more politely than they directed "minimal civilized behavior," which was expected. Likewise they found direct teaching of forms (Say please.) to be common, while explicit discussion of the rules of politeness (It's not polite to say...) was rare in learning requests. As in overall conversational development, younger

children benefit from *scaffolding*, a phenomenon in which the adult interlocutor interprets the child's meaning, provides missing elements and models appropriate contributions, carrying on both sides of the conversation. We may compare this to the bootstrap analogy in the parent-infant relationship (Warren and McCloskey 1993): the imputation or ascription of a certain intention or conversational role is a necessary precursor to its development. Such "as though" behavior (Dore 1979) satisfies the needs of both partners for satisfactory communication.

Play

Play is important in the acquisition of language, as it is in all areas of children's learning. Language can be both the object of attention and the medium of play (Bruner 1974b, Keenan 1974). Dramatic play provides a variety of contexts requiring the use of different degrees of politeness and thus different forms of speech acts. This has been recognized by educators in a variety of fields, as is evident in the use of role plays for many teaching purposes. In dramatic play, children can take on a wide variety of roles; one of the ways they play these roles and recognize the roles of others is in the way they speak. The linguistic features of children's play have been exploited by researchers in both naturalistic studies analyzing the language of pretend play and experimental studies eliciting language and metalinguistic comments using puppets or stories. Just as children show what they know by what they say and do, so they learn by acting and speaking in specific ways and having their language and actions accepted or challenged by their peers.

The variety of settings simulated by dramatic play contributes to many areas of children's development. This points up the close connection between the acquisition of language skills and the acquisition of social skills (Axia and Baroni 1985).

Child Directed Speech

Another powerful influence on children's acquisition of language is the language directed to them (Child Directed Speech, or CDS). Language acquisition theories of the 1950s and 1960s dealt primarily with child speech. Chomsky (1965) considered the input available to children from the language around them insufficient to account for the phenomenon of language acquisition and consequently postulated innate language acquisition abilities. Later researchers examined language directed to children and found it to have several characteristics which enhanced learning. According to Snow (1984) a substantial body of research has shown that this language is "syntactically simple, semantically concrete and relevant, repetitive, phonologically of high clarity and saliency and presented in a nonlinguistic situational and social context by virtue of which its meaning is made unmistakable (99)." Gender differences and cultural values are transmitted through this language. Following this thread, Gleason (1987) looked at CDS in both lab and natural settings to attempt to explain the development of well-documented differences between male and female use of language. Among the characteristics of male language is a tendency to use more direct imperatives than females do. Gleason found fathers used twice as many direct imperatives as mothers in home settings (in the lab, the

proportion was somewhat lower) and were likelier to use them to boys than to girls. Fathers were also likelier than mothers to use hints, while mothers used more conventional polite forms. Children began producing the patterns characteristic of their same sex parent by the age of four. The difference in observed adult speech and the difference in CDS are put forth by Sachs (1987) as well to explain in part the use of softer "obliges by girls than boys in same-sex, same-age dyads playing alone. Since boys have softer obliges in their repertoire and can use them on occasion, Sachs suggests that this difference in linguistic behavior is stylistic rather than developmental.

Metapragmatic Awareness

In a small exploratory study of preschool children (ages 2-4 years), Becker (1991) documents examples of metapragmatic comments which show them to be actively and consciously involved in learning both the linguistic forms and the social rules governing language use. These include questions ("Is that right?") and corrections of self and others as well as accounts of language behavior ("She said she wanted something so she said *please* and we gave her.") This promising beginning invites further work: since one child out of the six produced 72% of the comments, the question of background and individual variables may prove instructive.

Summary

Speech acts, dating from the 1960s, and communicative competence, dating from the 1970s, are the two central concepts involved in this review of the acquisition of directives in first language. Both concepts deal with the two elements of linguistic action and specific social contexts of use. Children learn the various forms of directives, e.g., direct forms, conventionally indirect forms, and unconventionally indirect forms, or hints; they also learn to match these forms to the expectations operating in given settings. The development described in this chapter is summarized in Table 1.

The first stage of the development of directives seems to me to be what Ochs (1979) calls "the emergence of contextual sensitivity": children begin to discover the relationship between themselves and their world, aided by caretakers who tend to ascribe intention to infant behavior. I would identify the next stage as the "transition from context to syntax" (Ochs 1979) in which children begin to recognize and linguistically encode important features of their surroundings, for example, speaking differently to different people. Although direct imperatives and want/need statements are frequent in the early years, by the age of four children have mastered several forms for requests. With increasing age they develop means to increase the likelihood of success in requesting by attending to politeness and countering resistance. Later social and cognitive development enables children to adopt different points of view; combined with greater linguistic sophistication this lets them tailor their requests according to addressee, cost, and resistance.

Table 1. Acquisition of directives in first language

0-6 mos. Children learn through experience that their actions have effects. (Perlocution)
< 1 year. Children communicate intentions through behavior. (Illocution)
1-2 years. One-word and two-word stages. (Ambiguous locution)
<4 years. Most requests use direct, imperative forms, although children can use several forms and differentiate addressees by formal features. They also "formulate reasonable pragmatic rules...and...seek verification for their knowledge." (Becker 1991, 1)
4-5 years. Children can use and comprehend a wide range of request forms.
6 years. Children can produce most of the linguistic forms used to make requests, including conventionally polite requests, but cannot "mask" content of requests.
7-8 years. Children can manipulate both content and form, produce very indirect requests, and vary their level of politeness to some degree in response to resistance.
>9 years. Children can vary form and content to produce indirect requests, and make metalinguistic comments about appropriate requests. They show awareness of others' points of view in imputing intentions to speakers and responding to resistance with more sophistication
>11 years. Children are adept at using requests that work, showing sensitivity to addressee, cost and resistance. More polite requests do not meet with more compliance by adults; simple requests work best. Aggravated requests may be used to younger children, while the most polite requests are reserved for older children and peers. Overall politeness falls off.

Learning the social rules for directives seems to me to involve what Ochs (1979) terms "the socialization of background knowledge." While children apparently have the ability to produce appropriate forms and often do so by age six or so, they continue to refine their ability to monitor their social environment and match their linguistic choices with it. Expected outcome plays a large part in both the production and perception of requests and is probably one of the most important types of background knowledge being socialized during language acquisition.

Children's directive behavior shows some well-established non-linear patterns associated with learning in general: as they get older, learning slows (S-curve) and they may tend to over generalize their application of politeness features, resulting in a subsequent drop in frequency as they "fine tune" their behavior (over generalization curve). In addition, a "bulge" in polite behavior toward non-intimate status-equals seems to occur in this data as in several other speech acts data sets.

Girls and boys show some differences in the use of directives, just as their adult counterparts do. While there is neither complete agreement nor overwhelming evidence, some trends have been consistently observed. Girls tend to produce "softer" directives than boys; their language is characterized by solidarity, mitigation and indirectness, while boy's language is more direct, aggressive and controlling. Both groups, however, show themselves able, on occasion, to use all kinds of directive language.

Children have several sources of knowledge about directives: language almost always proceeds from or accompanies action, and the action context is a primary source of

knowledge. Therefore, unless the situation is unusual, children do not need to analyze indirect requests literally before arriving at the directive interpretation by inference; the context will contain enough information to specify at least part of what is needed. Whether and when children attribute requestive intention to users of indirect requests is less clear.

One way contextual information is linked to linguistic behavior is by routines. While explicit statement of politeness rules was found to be rare, caregivers do teach specific behavior directly. In addition, parents create situations in which children can observe and practice different requests. Play offers children the opportunity to practice many roles, including role-appropriate language. The speech directed to children (CDS) has also been examined and found to have social as well as linguistic influences, notably gender differences. Finally, at least some children exhibit increasing metapragmatic awareness with age, i.e., they become aware of and explicitly state or ask about rules and explanations of language behavior.

In summary, child development is an organismic process involving many interacting systems; in this chapter I have described aspects of that development affecting the acquisition of one type of language behavior. Linguistic, cognitive, and social development are all involved in children's use of directives and all increase with age. One area may develop before another, e.g., children seem to know how to make many kinds of requests before they are consistently able to make them in appropriate settings, but in general children's appropriate and successful use of requests grows with them.

CHAPTER 3

THE ACQUISITION OF DIRECTIVES IN SECOND LANGUAGE(S)

In this chapter I will briefly define and illustrate the concepts of interlanguage (IL) and interlanguage pragmatics and discuss their importance in second language learning; define and illustrate the concept of transfer; and summarize the findings presented in representative literature on second language learners' use of directives. This literature includes several studies which are part of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), which I will briefly describe.

Interlanguage

The literature on the acquisition of directives by second language learners is part of a large body of work in the area of *interlanguage* (Selinker 1972, 1992). Interlanguage, in simplest terms, is the language learners use. This term was coined and continues to be used to recognize and call attention to the systematic nature of the language learners use. This conception of learner language is in contrast with a "deficiency" model, which defines and describes such language solely in terms of its deviation from native speaker norms. The language of English learners is not seen as "poor" English or "pretty good" English under this view, but as an independent language system based on the learners' current understanding and mastery of the target language. Selinker (1992, 260) refers to "a

partially separate linguistic system" united to the native language and the target language by "interlingual identifications."

How these identifications are made by the learner and how they function in the generation of the continually changing interlanguage are questions which are fundamental to understanding second language acquisition. Interlanguage, then, is important to researchers as behavior through which the process of second language acquisition may be indirectly observed. That this is indeed a robust concept is well attested to by the considerable body of interlanguage research (e.g., Dulay and Burt 1974, Gass and Selinker 1983, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989, Selinker 1992, Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993).

The major contribution of the interlanguage approach is the realization that the language of learners, while it differs to a greater or lesser extent from the target language, is a rule governed system and an appropriate object of study. The interlanguage concept has been fruitful in SLA research both because it has opened learner language to systematic investigation and because it has held out the promise of the discovery of universals in language learning, that is, underlying principles or processes which are at work in all language learning, regardless of the native language (NL) or the target language (TL) being considered. Selinker (1992) has recently reviewed the interlanguage concept in terms of "founding texts" --early works in contrastive analysis and error analysis, concepts from which the interlanguage hypothesis grew -- and more recent work in interlanguage research. He concludes that this concept is deeply grounded in the

tradition of scholarship in applied linguistics, that it has been shown to be robust and useful in research over two decades and that the ideas from which it sprang, reexamined and reformulated in the light of subsequent work, are congruent with current theories and useful in formulating future research questions.

Interlanguage Pragmatics

Interlanguage pragmatics deals with the "fit" between the language that learners use and the social contexts in which they use it. Kasper (1991) characterizes this area of study as "firmly based on the sociolinguistic assumption that in order to carry out verbal action, NNSs make systematic choices from their repertoire of realization procedures and linguistic means, and that these choices vary according to relevant factors in the speech event. (42)"

Questions about the sociolinguistic, sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects of interlanguage come within the purview of interlanguage pragmatics (Hurley, 1992). I will briefly explain these terms, using requests to illustrate. Sociopragmatics deals with the social norms covering what it is appropriate to ask of whom. Under normal circumstances I would not request superiors or unidentified strangers to wash my car, while this would be more or less acceptable in various circumstances as a request to a spouse, child or carwash employee. Sociolinguistics deals with the social norms covering how it is appropriate to make requests of people at different degrees of social and psychological distance from ourselves. For example, the car wash employee would

probably accept, even expect, speaker oriented requests such as "I'd like my car washed" or hearer oriented requests such as "Can you wash my car by five o'clock, (please)?" With family members, a more neutral orientation, "The car needs to be washed this weekend" might be less face-threatening, and therefore more polite. Whether it would be effective in getting the car washed is another question. Would it even be perceived as a request? This will vary with different hearers, and forms the subject of pragmalinguistics: the relationship between linguistic forms and their illocutionary effects. The car wash employee, for example, would assume that I had come to the car wash for the usual purpose, unless told otherwise, and would, strictly speaking, hardly require a directive. A remark like "I've got a really dirty car here" could function as both phatic talk and a signal to go proceed as usual (i.e., wash the car). The neutral "The car needs to be washed" leaves family members free to accept or reject a directive interpretation, gives them options, and is therefore polite, although experience with particular individuals may accustom us to read such remarks as less than neutral, especially if there is a shared background of expectations regarding family chores.

Expectations arising from context, the assumption and recognition of rights and obligations, and language-specific conventions are all factors in the complex, yet commonplace, task of recognizing requests. It may be argued that this is not so commonplace, as we do have misunderstandings and literal versus conventional interpretations of such sentences as "Can you close the window?" But these "failures" are noticeable because they are unusual -- and because they are interesting: they show us

basic things about the workings of a particular language. This leads us to the question of why interlanguage pragmatics is important.

The Importance of Interlanguage Pragmatics

As we have seen, the phenomenon of interlanguage offers researchers the opportunity to see language acquisition at work. Pragmatics, like other aspects of any language, will be acquired in ways that vary with different pairs of NLs and TLs. Interlanguage pragmatics, then, is important to SLA researchers for the reasons outlined above for interlanguage in general. Pragmatics is especially important to the social success of language use, and this gives interlanguage pragmatics a special importance in language teaching and learning.

To learners, interlanguage is the medium of communication in the TL. Its deviation from NS norms will mark the speaker as "foreign" with whatever connotations that may carry in a given context. Further, since interlanguage is specific to the NL and TL involved, it will mark the speaker as being from a particular country or part of the world. Reaction to this by NSs and NNSs alike may be positive, negative or neutral. Different degrees and types of deviance, moreover, will influence this reaction. Interlanguage pragmatics is important to learners, and to teachers, because *pragmatic* deviance carries a high potential for the occurrence of misunderstanding and/or offense in cross-cultural interactions. For example, speakers may be perceived as pushy if they violate conversational space norms and stand closer than their hearers are used to; they

may sound rude or autocratic if they use more direct requests than are customary in a given context in the target culture; they may seem clumsy and boorish if they do not use or understand indirect hints; or they may seem vague and evasive if they provide less information than expected. On the other hand, learners whose pragmatic skills are better developed , who use appropriate requests and suggestions, politeness markers and conversational gambits, may be able to compensate for shortcomings in grammar and pronunciation by engaging the attention and empathy of their hearers.

Our evaluations of these behaviors are culturally determined and are often unconscious. The behaviors are realized through the application of both linguistic and social norms. How appropriate these norms are to specific situations in the target culture will directly and profoundly affect the reactions learners experience and the effectiveness of their interactions. For this reason, awareness of pragmatic norms and facility in applying them are high priorities in language teaching.

Adult learners come to the language learning experience with extensive social and linguistic knowledge, and will, according to the interlanguage theory, compare aspects of this knowledge with congruent aspects of the target culture. The effects of this background knowledge and the comparisons learners make with it fall under the term *transfer*.

Transfer

Transfer is an important term in SLA theory, as we have already seen in Chapter 1. The process of transfer is generally considered to operate in most second language learning to a greater or lesser extent. It has been shown by work such as that of Dulay and Burt (1974) not to account for all differences between IL and TL. There has been some controversy about the relative importance of developmental processes versus transfer in language learning, although a middle position is tenable (see, for example, Takashima 1992). Gass and Selinker (1983), Dechert and Raupach (1989) and Selinker (1992) provide extensive background on transfer and its relation to interlanguage.

Transfer is a term to which many meanings have been ascribed. Dechert and Raupach (1989) cull ten or so from the papers in an important collection on the subject (Gass and Selinker 1983), and another half dozen from various other sources. Whether or not we have evidence of transfer working as a process in second language acquisition seems open to debate among researchers, but it appears to be a useful hypothesis in investigating and describing the interaction between linguistic knowledge individuals have mastered and new linguistic knowledge. (See Dechert and Raupach (1987) for a discussion of various definitions of the term *transfer* and attendant issues in second language acquisition research.)

As Dechert and Raupach (1989) point out, all new experience is processed in terms of background knowledge or experience one already has. As children acquire their first language, they master new sounds, structures and pragmatic skills in terms of what

they are already able to do. In learning a second language, the linguistic knowledge attained in learning the first language can be an important asset insofar as it is generally applicable or provides awareness of features present across languages. For example, sounds in a second language may be taught by reference to sounds in the first language, and, while the specifics of, for example, verb forms and politeness markers may differ, the first language has these features and the learner can call on a knowledge of their general characteristics in learning the (different) second language versions.

Transfer is generally used to refer to or explain instances in which either learners' current mastery of a TL feature, or their production of it -- that is either their interlanguage competence or performance -- resembles a NL cognate feature in some way. If the TL and NL share certain features, the transfer is referred to as positive or facilitative and is seen as helping the learner acquire the TL features. It is difficult to see this type of transfer at work in interlanguage, as it is difficult to separate from successful learning, but it is often invoked as an explanation of the success of learners from one language background versus another at certain tasks. For example, if Spanish learners of English exhibit a larger vocabulary and more accurate use than Chinese speakers at the same proficiency level, this may by explained by the large number of cognate words English shares with Spanish as opposed to Asian languages.

If, on the other hand, target features either differ substantially from NL features or do not exist in the NL at all, learners may call on phonetic, grammatical and pragmatic knowledge they already have as support in mastering TL features. This may result in

production which deviates from the target in the direction of the NL, and this deviation may occur in the learners' understanding of, or hypotheses about the target, -- their IL competence --or in their execution of the target under various conditions -- their IL performance. Examples among English learners include the substitution of phonemes, e.g., the palatalized for the retroflex / r / or the voiced alveolar stop or fricative, / d / or / z /, for / ð / the clause final position for verbs required in some other Germanic languages; the retention of agreement features of adjectives required in romance languages; and the application of L1 norms to the use of translated politeness markers, e.g., *please,* in L2 (for a treatment of this last example see House 1989).

In the case of pragmatic transfer, such as that mentioned in the last study given as an example, it is not only linguistic features which are carried over from one language to another, but also social and pragmatic norms regarding the proper way to interact in certain relationships and the most effective way to convey meanings and intentions. There seems to be some evidence that this transfer works in both directions among highly proficient speakers, creating what Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) refer to as "an intercultural style of speaking...on which [speakers] rely regardless of the language being used (3)." (Blum-Kulka, 1991; Blum-Kulka and Sheffer 1993; Tao and Thompson, 1991).

Cross-Cultural Speech Acts Realization Project (CCSARP)

Researchers often suggest further research on a particular language feature or point to the need for further investigation appropriate for integration with extant work. One of the most salient features of the CCSARP is its ambitious design to facilitate these ends. Several of the studies reported on below are part of this project.

The CCSARP "was set up to investigate cross-cultural and intralingual variation in two speech acts: requests and apologies (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989, 11)" using data elicited by a written discourse completion test (DCT). While acknowledging some drawbacks, the researchers felt this type of instrument would yield more voluminous, more comparable and more prototypical data than would more naturalistic observation methods of data collection. The DCT requires the subject to complete a written dialogue set in a specified situation.

The questionnaire includes sixteen situations designed to elicit requests and apologies (eight each) in which the social distance and status relationship of the speaker and hearer vary. The requests situations are:

> S1. A student asks his roommate to clean up the kitchen the latter had left in a mess the night before.
> S3. A young woman wants to get rid of a man pestering her on the street.
> S5. A student asks another student to lend her some notes
> S7. A student asks people living on the same street for a ride home.
> S9. An applicant calls for information on a job advertised in a paper.
> S11. A policemen asks a driver to move her car.
> S13. A student asks a teacher for an extension on a seminar paper.
> S15. A university professor asks a student to give his lecture a week earlier than scheduled. (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989b, 14)

These situations are supposed to pose approximately the same threat to the hearers' face and thus require approximately the same politeness, or redressive action, across the Western cultures investigated so far, at least for the student population from which the sample is taken. A coding system has been devised to analyze the responses so as to make the data comparable among the several studies done within the project. The goals of the project are threefold: to investigate cross-cultural variation, sociopragmatic variation and interlanguage variation. The term *interlanguage variation* is used here in the sense of interlanguage discussed above, that is, variation in the language learners use in their L2s, and should not be confused with variation between languages, which is termed *cross-cultural variation*. Since this last is germane to this review, I will quote the authors' statement of the third goal in full:

> To investigate the similarities and differences in the realization patterns of given speech acts between native and non-native speakers of a given language, relative to the same social constraints. (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989, 13)

The requests elicited in the CCSARP were analyzed into several components which will be illustrated in the following example (Blum-Kulka House and Kasper 1989, 17):

> Judith, I missed class yesterday, do you think I could borrow your notes? I promise to return them by tomorrow.

The address term, *Judith*, belongs to the alerter category, which can include names and "semantic variations" such as darling. The explanation, or grounder, *I missed class yesterday*, constitutes a supporting move, as does the promise to return the notes. The requests proper is called the head act and is analyzed by strategy type and perspective. There are nine strategy types arranged according to level of directness from level one direct imperatives, in which the illocutionary force is "mood derivable" through performatives, obligation and want statements and suggestions to conventionally indirect query preparatory requests such as *Could you please... Would you mind...* and finally including hints. The following requests are given by the authors as illustrations of each level:

1. Clean up that mess.
2. I am asking you to clean up the mess.
3. I would like to ask you to give your presentation a week earlier than scheduled.
4. You'll have to move that car.
5. I really wish you'd stop bothering me.
6. How about cleaning up?
7. Could you clear up the kitchen, please?
8. You have left the kitchen in a right mess.
9. I am a nun. (In response to a persistent hassler)

While the concept of directness is central to most of the investigations in this field, a less detailed scale seems to have proved more useful.

> Languages may differ in the relative position granted to individual strategy types on this scale, but a distinction between three main levels of directness has been empirically shown to be valid across several languages (Blum-Kulka, 1987; House, 1986). These three levels are: (a) direct strategies comprised of strategies 1. to 5.; (b) conventionally indirect strategies, comprised of strategies 6. and 7. and (c) non-conventionally indirect strategies comprising strategies 8. and 9. (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989b, 18)

Blum-Kulka and House (1989b) point out that not only do the variables targeted in the CCSARP, status and social distance, affect the variation in requests, but that between individuals perceptions of obligation, difficulty and expectation of compliance vary across the situations used in the project.

Further comments on the DCT and the CCSARP will be included in Chapter 5. For further description of the project, including the apology situations used, a manual for applying the coding system and several resultant studies, see Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989a).

Research Findings: Acquisition of Directives in L2

Directives have been extensively studied by second language acquisition researchers, probably for the same reasons that have made them a focus of investigation in first language acquisition: they are relatively common and easy to recognize in everyday discourse in a wide variety of settings; and , because of their face threatening nature, they

require attention to politeness features and carry a high potential for misunderstanding or inappropriate use. While it is certainly possible to observe situations in which even careful analysis may not be able to untangle the illocutionary force of an utterance, and we do not always have access to information about speaker intentions, cases of difficult interpretation are relatively small in number compared to the number of directives that function successfully. At the same time, the more or less successful communication of illocutionary force may be accompanied by a more or less successful fit between the linguistic form used and the context, that is, speakers may experience pragmalinguistic failure or sociolinguistic failure, or both, or, of course, neither.

Almost all the research done on the acquisition of directives by NNSs has used methodologies suggested by the interlanguage hypothesis (Selinker 1972), and has thus included native speaker L1 and L2 data as well as interlanguage L2 data, that is, learner language. This allows the study of both comparative pragmatics, the comparison of similar speech acts in different languages, and interlanguage pragmatics, the investigations of speakers' pragmatic competence in their second languages. This necessarily gives a comparative cast to the whole field, which I will discuss in chapter 5, and results in most of the basic questions being formulated in comparative terms. I will use the following four questions to organize the presentation of research findings on the acquisition of directives in second language:

How do the linguistic forms used by NNSs differ from those used by NSs?

How do the sociopragmatic rules used by NNSs differ from those used by NSs?

What are the proposed effects of interaction between the L1 and the L2?

What are the proposed effects of time and proficiency level?

Linguistic Forms

It is important to note at the outset that none of the studies surveyed made a point of the grammaticality of the NNS production of directives; that is, linguistic form here does not refer to whether or not the NNSs were able to produce specific requests forms correctly in the TL. Rather it refers to the question of which TL forms they used.

While there is some evidence that, as we might expect, NNSs at intermediate proficiency levels and above have a smaller repertoire of ways to make requests than NSs, they have been shown to have generally similar *ranges* of strategies at their command. For example, Blum-Kulka (1982, 1983) and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) have found that speakers of English and Hebrew use direct forms, such as imperatives, which may be softened with lexical markers (e.g., please); conventionally indirect forms such as interrogatives with modals; and unconventionally indirect forms, such as hints for requests. Native speakers may have more ways of realizing each of these three general types of requests, but NNSs can realize all three general types, too. What is overwhelmingly borne out in the research is that NNSs as a whole will show different *distributions* of these forms across different situations and different preferences than NSs in specific situations.

Blum-Kulka (1983) argues that while there are "procedures," or strategies, which are shared between languages, e.g., English and Hebrew share an indirect request

procedure, the "realizations" of these procedures may be different, as may the contexts in which they are applied. Learners, therefore need to relearn "procedures, grammar/lexicon and social appropriateness." (1982, 30)

Koike (1989) conducted a two-part study of comprehension and production of speech acts by beginning students of Spanish in the U.S. (thus, a FL situation). She found that students were able to identify speech acts (from a multiple choice list) as requests, apologies or commands with great accuracy (95-98% correct). Participants were also asked about features which helped them make the identification: certain words, intonation, or the message as a whole (they could also indicate lack of comprehension). The category "certain words" was the only one found to be significant overall, with intonation playing a part in the recognition of commands. Translated terms such as *please*, *I'm sorry,* and *You have to*...mark specific speech acts, and lexical items such as *lend*, *accident*, *clean*, *dirty room* help fill in the situation. This micro-level analysis by the students may not be surprising in a group of beginners (12 weeks instruction). A much more advanced group of NS German learners of English performing complex negotiation tasks in oral role plays exhibited a similar tendency: Kasper (1984) traced learners' inability to distinguish phatic from referential talk and their misreading of the illocutionary force if some speech acts to "bottom-up" rather than "top-down" processing. The latter approach she described in terms of "frames" or schemata in which discourse, conversational and contextual knowledge are organized. It seems to be these larger

linguistic, social and pragmatic considerations which influence the interpretation of much conversation, and which NNSs often lack.

Studies such as these are important for at least two reasons. First, language learning proceeds on many fronts and on many levels, and what learners can recognize and understand is an integral part of their competence and thus grist for the mill of SLA theoretical research. In other words, our picture of what a learner can do in a second language must include comprehension and judgment as well as production; often learners become aware of features of a language before they can use them, and accounts of language learning must include this phenomenon. Second, the relationship between recognition and production, and between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge in general, is fundamental to second language teaching, which attempts to provide classroom experiences that will equip learners to handle a wide variety of real situations.

Tanaka and Kawade's (1982) study of politeness judgments by Japanese and native speakers American English was augmented with a multiple choice test of 53 NSs and 32 NNSs with mixed L1s.. The test offered six formulas as possible requests in each of ten situations, all used in the judgment task. Responses were generally similar: learners and native speakers alike used the highly conventional *Would you...* form across all situations, and both NS and NNS group varied their responses across situations. However, NNSs used the least polite form more often that NSs. Similarly, Koike (1989) found that while subjects could identify specific speech acts, when they were called on to

produce requests for two situations, beginning American students of Spanish used less polite forms more often than either American English or Spanish norms would dictate (e.g., 60% and 74% in L2 Spanish versus 95% and 96% in L1 English) and used less polite forms more often in the more complex rather than the more straightforward situation (74% versus 60%). Both of these findings, and particularly the latter, seem to substantiate the claims made elsewhere that when lacking adequate linguistic skills for the task at hand, speakers will be as clear as possible, often at the expense of politeness.

One of the clearest and most interesting results to come out of these studies is the discovery of a stage of interlanguage in which NNSs use "too much talk" compared with NSs. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) analyzed CCSARP data including over 2000 tokens of requests by NS and NNS of Hebrew. They found that the NNS used longer utterances and traced the source of the "extra" talk to external modifications (rather than internal modifications or differences in strategy type.) Further, not only was the utterance length of the NNSs, who were NS of English, higher than that of the Hebrew NSs, but also higher than that of English NSs. This makes transfer an unlikely explanation of the phenomenon. The data were analyzed for two other factors: proficiency level and length of stay. While utterance length increased linearly with proficiency level, it increased and then decreased to approximate NS levels at about five to seven years in country. The authors suggest that with increasing proficiency NNSs can say more, but feel the need to ensure comprehension by adding extra information. NNSs "tended to incorporate contextual information and/or elements of previous turn into speech act" which the

authors speculate may represent a transfer of classroom practice. I would suggest another possibility is that the NNSs have not yet mastered the shared background that forms the context for conversation. They may not be sure what can be assumed and what must be stated or repeated in a given context. This is one of the few instances in which a developmental trend can be seen. Although apparently the data exists in the CCSARP, proficiency and length of stay are not stated variables in most of the other studies. Continued analysis of additional data along these lines would add to the picture we have of how learners' interlanguage varies over time.

This increased amount of talk among learners at the intermediate level and above is corroborated by Faerch and Kasper (1989) and Kasper (1991). In these studies of native speakers of Danish, German and British English and NNSs of German and English (NL Danish) the researchers examined internal and external modification of requests with respect to contextual factors and cross-cultural and interlanguage variation. They also found longer requests typical of NNSs and located the additional talk in the "use of politeness markers, of syntactic downgraders (for the NNSs of German) and, most strikingly, of supporting moves. (245)". Once again we see that conversational norms -- this time the Gricean conversational maxims of quantity and relevance -- may be violated in order to insure clarity. Edmonson and House (1991) however, offer evidence that this characteristic of learners is not ubiquitous; they cite data, also from German learners of English, which does not exhibit this tendency. This is particularly puzzling since some of the contradictory data was collected through oral production, which was found by Rintell

and Mitchell to produce longer utterances by NNS than written DCTs. Data collection methods may account for some of the discrepancy; this topic will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Social, Linguistic and Pragmatic Rules

The use of particular forms to make requests is based on sociopragmatic, sociolinguistic and pragmalinguistic norms. These norms, as described above, apply to the relationship between the request and the social context, the language used and the social context, and the language used and the request, respectively. Thus there are three possible areas of "failure" or inappropriate use. This is corroborated by the cross-cultural comparisons included in many of the studies being presented here; learners are faced with three sorts of "conflicts": the L1 and L2 may exhibit (1) similar situations but different strategies, (2) similar strategies but different forms or realizations, (3) and similar forms but different illocutionary forces.

Similar Situations, Different Strategies

The first difference, the use of different strategies or procedures in similar situations, has been noted cross-culturally in investigations of a number of speech acts. Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990), for example, note that Japanese speakers are likelier to include a statement of philosophy or proverbial wisdom in certain types of refusals in Japanese, and that Japanese learners of English are less likely to do so in

English than in Japanese, but more likely to do so in English than NSs. In some cases the strategy chosen is not only different from what a NS is likely to use, but potentially confusing because of its unexpectedness in a given context. Beebe and Takahashi (1991) tell of an American eating in a Japanese restaurant in New York. She was asked by a waiter who was a Japanese L2 speaker of English, "Do you have a bag?" This was a puzzling questions for the American in this context; she perceived it is an inappropriate request. The waiter intended the questions as a warning that she should watch her handbag, as he feared someone nearby intended to take it.

Similarly, cultural differences have been observed in compliment responses, with variations including acceptance or acknowledgment ("Thank you") and self-deprecation through polite denial ("It's really not very good"). These differences may be based on different face orientations in the politeness norms of different cultures; some cultures put more emphasis on positive face needs, group membership and solidarity, while others emphasize negative face needs, individual autonomy and privacy. Garcia (1989) found that while native English speakers preferred negative politeness strategies in apologies, (that is, expressing regret for inconvenience and offering explanations to redress the offense to the hearer of not having attended a party), Spanish NS speaking English tended to use positive politeness strategies which reflected their L1 social norm, (that is calling on group membership and solidarity to elicit understanding of the situation).

In the case of requests, Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) found a similar difference between native speakers of English and Hebrew. They used a multiple choice test to

investigate the acceptability of requests, and found that English NSs preferred "negative-politeness-oriented indirect strategies" (Could you possibly lend me the money?) while Hebrew NSs preferences showed a shift toward more "positive-politeness-oriented strategies" (How about lending me the money?) with a more "informal, optimistic" approach, while both groups found conventionally indirect requests highly acceptable (I'd appreciate it if you could lend me the money.). These differences are important to keep in mind when such features as "directness" are being considered. As we have seen in Chapter 2, indirectness is not always equated with politeness, but a request that is perceived as "too direct" may well be perceived as rude in cultures which emphasize negative politeness and so seek to minimize imposition. This feature may be much less important, however, in a culture which uses different means to convey polite intentions. The possibilities for cross-cultural misunderstanding here are clear. To natives of a culture emphasizing negative face needs, positive-politeness-oriented directives may seem at once too direct and too familiar, while to those who emphasize positive face needs, negative-politeness-oriented directives may seem overly formal and cold.

Politeness theory is an explicit or implicit part of many of the proposed explanations in this field, and indeed often informs the research questions addressed. The CCSARP uses the concepts of social distance and status, for example in developing test situations. The picture of learner language which is developing through research in IL pragmatics is somewhat clouded by different definitions, or at least emphases, relating to politeness. Tanaka and Kawade's (1982) study, for example, uses a "distance-politeness

model" in which social distance and psychological distance are both considered as factors in overall distance. "Social distance is a function of such variables as age, sex, social status and so on. Psychological distance is related to the way one perceives another in relation to himself ...[and]...may be a function of the psychological variable *like-dislike*. (24)." This recalls Blum-Kulka's (1990) suggestion that "relationship affect" be added to the power, distance and imposition variations in Brown and Levinson's model.

Similar Strategies, Different Linguistic Forms

The second difference is based on hypothesized cross-cultural speech act similarities such as the use of inference and sensitivity to context (Blum-Kulka 1982), which may be realized in similar or different ways. In different languages and cultures, social and interactional values dictate varying degrees of importance to certain features of any situation. Thus, what will be inferred from a remark about room temperature such as *It's cold in here*, will vary from culture to culture depending on the hearer's perception of her role vis-à-vis the speaker and situation (Is she responsible for the speaker's comfort? Does she have control of the window or thermostat?) and on the conventionality of using hints to make requests, i.e., what the hearer expects. I would put expectation, here, in the same category as frames or schemata, as an organizing paradigm called up by certain features of the situation. That is, through experience members of a culture come to recognize situations, and therefore expect certain things to happen in certain situations. We expect different things to happen at a lecture than at a barn dance, and we feel freer to

open a friend's kitchen drawer to look for a spoon than we would at a formal reception in the home of a stranger.

Likewise, different contextual features have different values cross-culturally and require different responses. For example, the social distance perceived between acquaintances or neighbors, or the relative status of employer and employee will vary across cultures; in addition, in situations involving approximately similar distance or status, different cultures will require attention to different hearer attributes, such as negative or positive face needs, and different languages may have language specific ways of enacting that attention; this is what we mean by linguistic politeness. In a review of research on linguistic politeness, Kasper (1990) analyzes several aspects of politeness and discusses the challenges attendant on its cross-cultural comparison.

These cultural differences in perception of interactional and contextual features of situations can cause trouble for NNSs. They may be faced with situations in which their L1 shares a procedure with the L2 and they may approach the request the same way a NS would, e.g., intending to be indirect, conventionally polite toward a higher status hearer, but their choice of forms may be influenced by L1 ways of being indirect and they may fail to convey the degree of politeness intended, regardless of their success in making their request understood. Blum-Kulka (1982, 1983) argues, moreover, that such strategic similarities are "very general": "the nature of the interdependence among pragmatic, linguistic and social factors that determine speech acts realization varies from one

language to another,"(1983, 38) so that learners need to acquire L2 "procedures, grammar/lexicon and social appropriateness." (1982, 30)

The case of requestive hints presents a bit of a puzzle. In testing the correlation between indirectness and politeness, Blum-Kulka (1987) found that the parallel held at least tenuously except for the least direct forms, or hints, which did not end up on the most polite end of the scale. We might also expect intuitively that so indirect and context-embedded a strategy would show wide cross-cultural differences in use and interpretation. While little has been done to investigate hints specifically, Weizman's work shows a somewhat surprising picture.

The existence of conventionally indirect, or polite, request forms has been noted in all the languages studied, as has the process of inference sometimes needed to interpret less conventional indirect requests or hints. Weizman (1989, 1993) has found that hints are used in all the languages studied in the CCSARP although they are a low-frequency strategy. In a more detailed look at Australian English, Canadian French and Israeli Hebrew (1989) she found that there is a substantial degree of situational variation in the use of hints across all three languages. Pointing out that hints are ambiguous, or what Brown and Levinson (1987) called "off-record", she explains that these offer the speaker and the hearer both an "out": the speaker can deny that the hint was a request and the hearer can ignore the requestive force of the hint without needing to make an outright refusal. Weizman postulates that learners might use this feature of hints as a "communication strategy" (Weizman 1993) in situations of uncertainty. This would

suggest that some aspect of their use by NNS would be significantly different than use by NS, but she did not find this to be the case. Examining NS and NNS use of hints, she found that their frequency of use, substrategies employed and situational variation were very similar, and that further investigation would be needed to investigate their use as a communication strategy.

What she did find on examining the construction of NS and NNS hints was that while similar substrategies were used, notably stating potential grounders and questioning feasibility, it was more common for NNS to use more than one substrategy. She compares this to the findings of verbosity among NNS discussed above, and indeed this does seem to strengthen the case for characterizing learners' speech at certain stages as more verbose and redundant that that of NSs. While Weizman looked at the distribution of hints in Hebrew learners as a function of length of stay and found no relation, she does not present a comparison of the level of redundancy with length of stay, which might prove instructive. One important conclusion Weizman (1993) advances is that the similarity in NS and NNS use of hints may mean that this strategy is "one of the pragmatic essentials with which learners come to L2 and which, therefore, they need not acquire anew (134)."

The waiter's question, "Do you have a bag?", described in Beebe and Takahashi (1991) illustrates some of the problems attendant on different expectations, different strategies and different ways of realizing those strategies. Although a warning was not inappropriate, the choice of the indirect hint strategy and a form used so conventionally

for requests (as well as the indefinite article) prevented it from being accomplished successfully.

Another aspect of learners' mastery of linguistic forms is their receptivity, i.e., their ability to understand the social and illocutionary meanings of different forms. Carrell and Honneker's (1981) study compared the politeness judgments of 73 intermediate and advanced NNSs of English with those of 42 NSs for requests in a purchase context. They found a high correlation between NSs and NNSs across NLs and levels. (The 'p' values for the comparison across levels was well below the significance level, but somewhat higher that that for the comparison across NLs.) NNSs also gave a wider range of politeness judgments. Similar findings were reported in Tanaka and Kawade's (1982) study of native speakers of Japanese which, while using a smaller sample (N=20) expanded the contexts to twelve action requests. These findings suggest that while production using L2 strategies may be challenging, learners' ability to recognize politeness features of L2s and judge the acceptability of requests is similar to NS, at least in certain situations.

Similar Forms, Different Illocutionary Forces

The third difference shows up when NNSs share even more, using similar request forms in L1 and L2. Again, in many situations this will be highly facilitative, but it can also lead to illocutionary failures. If such shared forms are conventional, they may have acquired different levels of social appropriateness or illocutionary force in different

languages. For example, (Blum-Kulka 1982, 1983) while the Hebrew translation of "Can you. . ." functions with the same illocutionary force as in English, the translation of "Could you. . .," while directly comparable grammatically, can be a request, but is much less likely to be so than in English. On the other hand, Hebrew translations of "Perhaps you'll. . ." and "Are you ready to. . ." function as conventional requests, a role they are less likely to fill in English. Therefore, when learners apply these similar forms to situations in the target culture, they are often not successful in conveying the requestive force they intend, and may receive informational answers to their questions. The conventionality of these request forms is language- and culture-specific. Gibbs (1986) tested the hypothesis that in American English the most conventional request form addresses the perceived obstacle (if any) to the fulfillment of the request. This is termed the Obstacle Hypothesis. Requests were elicited through a written questionnaire and in realistic, though arranged, situations; acceptability judgments were elicited and comprehension of requests was tested. Results showed that the choice of indirect request form such as *Can you...*, *May I...*, and *Do you have* ...were strongly related to obstacles stipulated in each situation.

We have seen evidence, however, that the use of some of these forms in English and Hebrew does not follow the same conventions (Blum-Kulka, 1982). Thus, while the same strategy might be used in a given situation, and the same linguistic forms exist in the two languages, the conventions governing their use are not the same. The informal, optimistic request such as *How about lending me the money?*, though usable in English as

a suggestion/request, is more widely acceptable in Hebrew, and the form *Could you...* does not always convey the same illocutionary force in Hebrew as in English, leading to possible sociolinguistic or pragmalinguistic failure. This lack of comparability in a situation where there is such similarity of form and meaning, and where similar obstacles would be perceived, seems to indicate that while the Obstacle Hypothesis may explain the development of conventionality in English, it is not the whole story. I suggest that the concepts of negative and positive politeness may help: in a negative-politeness-oriented culture imposition on the hearer is a salient and governing feature of requests, while in positive-politeness-oriented cultures other considerations are as, or more, important. In the first situation, the requests may be approached by first checking on such feasibility conditions as ability, permission or possession, offering the hearer the opportunity to deny a prerequisite rather than a direct request. In the second situation, there is a higher assumption of compliance, so that while the same potential obstacles exist, they are not as important in the situation as issues of belonging and solidarity.

This description of three possible areas which may be problematic for NNSs involve considerable cross-over and interaction among the linguistic, social and pragmatic features of requests. Learners come to language learning with a wealth of experience in manipulating these features in their L1s and the acquisition of their ability to do so is part of their *enculturation* (Saville-Troike, 1985) in their native culture. As they learn another language and adjust to another culture, they will be *acculturated* to a greater or lesser degree in the target culture, and, they will process this new knowledge and experience in

terms of their first language and culture. How researchers see these two linguistic and cultural systems interacting is the subject of the next section.

Interaction of L1 and L2

Transfer is a complex subject and one which, in its entirety, is certainly beyond the scope of this paper. For purposes of comparing what is known about the acquisition of directives in L1 and L2, the most important and useful observations will involve how researchers hypothesize that transfer works in IL pragmatics and the findings on which they have based these hypotheses.

Although, as we have seen previously, transfer does not account for all, or even most, production errors, and there are clear cases in which IL behavior lies outside the norms of both L1 and L2, there is substantial evidence put forth in IL research on which claims of pragmatic transfer are based (See Beebe et al., 1990, for references in addition to those in this paper).

Beebe et al (1990) looked at refusals by Japanese learners of English and posited a test for the operation of transfer form L1 to L2. They first examined and compared NL data in both languages and analyzed them to establish the content of formulas used, their preferred order and frequencies of occurrence for refusals of requests, invitations, offers and suggestions in different status relation situations. They then established the values between L1 and L2 frequencies as values which would reveal transfer at work: in other words, if Japanese learners' English showed a deviation from NS English in the direction

of NS Japanese for a particular refusal feature in a particular situation, their IL would be considered to be influenced by L1 transfer at that point. They found "the order, frequency and intrinsic content (or tone) of the semantic formulas" used to make refusals showed evidence of pragmatic transfer. One specific finding of this study was Japanese NSs and Japanese L2 English speakers tended to give different responses in refusing higher and lower status interlocutors, while the Americans tended to give similar responses to both higher and lower status interlocutors and to differentiate between them and status equals. The authors suggest that social distance is the relevant factor here, rather than status; thus, Japanese speakers vary their responses more according to status and American English speakers more according to social distance, and the Japanese L2 speakers of English transfer the Japanese norm into their IL responses.

Particular lexical items may be transferred, and when they have a strong link to pragmatic functions their transfer may be complicated by the interaction of these two levels of language learning. House (1989) hypothesized that German learners of English would use the politeness marker *please* more often than NSs, as they were generally considered to use its German equivalent, *bitte*, more in German. She found, however, "a fairly comparable distribution of *please/bitte*" among German and English NSs and between males and females, with a few exceptions. One clear result was that in German imperatives are most often marked for politeness in this way, and in certain situations this request form (Move the car, please.) is used more by Germans NS and German learners of English than by native speakers, (see. e.g., Edmonson and House, 1991) who more often

use a query preparatory (Would you move your car?) which includes *please* less regularly. German and English have a similar *range* of directness possibilities, moreover, NSs of both languages are known to use the full range across situations, so we would ascribe the greater frequency of direct German NNSs requests to pragmatic rather than syntactic transfer.

House and Kasper (1981) in a more comprehensive study of politeness markers in English and German requests and complaints, find that on an eight-point directness scale (1=indirect, 8=direct) German NSs most frequently used a level 6 request while English NSs most often used a level 3 request. German NSs also tend to use upgraders, or strengtheners, in requests more than English NSs. Thus a politeness marker such as *bitte* may be transferred as *please* not only as a lexical item on its own, or as part of certain formulas, but as part of requestive behavior which is generally more direct than English target language norms. House and Kasper's (1981) further analysis of these speech acts, however, reveals that the interaction of directness level with other components of speech acts such as upgraders and downgraders, supporting moves, politeness and modality markers is very complex and they question the legitimacy of equating requests based on directness level of the head act. The implication for our topic, pragmatic transfer, is that some or all of the components of speech acts may be transferred from L1 to L2 with similar, neutral or different social and pragmatic effects.

It is important to reflect for a moment on what learners are transferring from their L1s to L2s. Transfer was a strong theoretical explanation for language errors and learning

difficulties in the 1960s and early 1970s with its basis in the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) (see Chapter 1). Later research revealed the shortcomings of the CAH and showed other (developmental and cognitive) forces to be at work. Yet transfer has continued to be recognized, and more recent reconsiderations have posited a more complex role for this concept in SLA. Researchers have noted transfer of phonological, morphological and syntactic features. (See Gass and Selinker (1983) and Dechert and Raupach (1989) for extensive treatments of transfer topics.)

Here we are considering the transfer of sociocultural norms; these are exactly the questions with which IL pragmatics is concerned: what you can ask of whom, how you can ask what of whom, and how you can get someone to do what you want. Sometimes the strategies and even the forms used to accomplish pragmatic ends will be similar in L1 and L2. It is difficult to sort out positive L1 transfer from an IL approximation to the target. We notice when some aspect of the speech act is not the same, but not all differences are equally noticeable or troublesome. Sometimes different is just different, and the speech act may still be effective and inoffensive. Of special concern for learners, and teachers, are situations in which the difference between their IL and the expectations of the target culture causes ineffectiveness and/or offense, i.e., pragmatic failure.

The possibility of pragmatic transfer raises the question of cultural identity. Beebe (1985) suggests that while transfer is often considered a psycholinguistic process -- a way in which the NNS handles a shortfall in some area of L2 competence -- it may also function as a sociolinguistic process, which can be conscious or unconscious and which

asserts cultural identity. In Thailand, for example, learners often do not want their English to sound too native, which they regard as showing a lack of cultural pride (R. Vann, English Department, Iowa State University, personal communication). Transfer of any language feature could operate in this way, and in fact style shifts and dialect shifts among native speakers occur to the same effect. People use regional dialects to signal membership in a group and establish solidarity with group members. Use of a standard dialect, or formal register, like the use of very native-like English by NNSs in some settings, may appear to be denial of group identity or showing up one's peers.

Pragmatic features seem particularly good candidates for transfer of this sociolinguistic type: they may be under less conscious control than many other aspects of language; they carry strong cultural identity force; and they may be transferred without sacrificing comprehensibility, clarity, or even eloquence, depending on one's level of competence. Blum-Kulka and Kasper (1993) refer to the "intercultural style" used by "speakers competent in two languages (3)" which is distinct from and influenced by both. Here, clearly, proficiency level plays an important role. There is very little work on the influence of L2 on L1 (Blum-Kulka, 1991; Yoon, 1991; Blum-Kulka and Sheffer, 1993; Tao and Thompson 1993), but intuition would suggest that a considerable degree of proficiency and automaticity would need to be achieved in the L2 in order for it to strongly influence so fundamental a personality element as native language and sociocultural norms.

Effects of Proficiency and Length of Stay

What do we know about the role of proficiency and time in-country on acquisition of pragmatic competence, specifically the use of directives? Not a great deal. Very few studies have used these factors as variables. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1982) found that the greater amount of talk produced by learners was sensitive to these two factors: amount of talk increased linearly with proficiency level, and increased and then decreased with length of stay, approximating NS norms after five to seven years. Weizman seems to indicate (1993) that while data on these two variables was available for some of her subjects, this was not the case throughout the CCSARP data sets. She analyzed frequency of learners' requestive hints with respect to these variables without result, but unfortunately did not apply them to analysis of the greater volume of learner talk.

The first of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's findings makes sense if we consider that low proficiency learners do not have the linguistic wherewithal to be very talkative; the authors suggest that intermediate and advanced learners are more competent but may lack confidence in their ability to make themselves clear, and so use additional information as a communication strategy. The long stay required to come close to NS norms may explain why increased proficiency level does not lead to the same end: the subjects of most studies in this field are students of the TL and as such will not have been in-country for five to seven years. A two-way comparison of length of stay and proficiency level would shed further light on this subject, as would the systematic inclusion of this information for all subjects.

Summary

Interlanguage is the language learners use. It is an ever-changing system, based on the learner's approximation to the target. As long as the learner continues to develop new hypotheses about how the target language works and to realize these new hypotheses through practice, interlanguage continues to develop. The development of this concept and the substantial literature based on it come from the recognition of interlanguage as systematic and productive in function and useful in research. Interlanguage pragmatics is the study of the variation of interlanguage across situations. The interlanguage pragmatics of requests deals with questions of what it is appropriate to ask of whom, how specific requests should be made in specific situations, and the relationship between choice of request form and success of the request. The importance of social interaction of all sorts underscores the importance of interlanguage pragmatics to language learners and teachers: NNSs will suffer if they do not attend to what is offensive and what is effective in the target culture.

Transfer is an important concept in the study of interlanguage. This concept formed the basis for the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis which proposed to predict and explain language learning difficulty through a comparison of L1 and L2. The supremacy of transfer was challenged by studies such as Dulay and Burt's (1974) investigation of learner errors which found developmental trends like those of L1 learners, giving rise to the developmental, or L1=L2 hypothesis. A compromise position is generally favored in

the present literature. Another way to look at transfer is as the background knowledge through which all new knowledge is processed; while it may occasionally get in the way (negative transfer), it is essential to learning and often facilitative in specific instances (positive transfer). Negative transfer produces salient errors and interferes with the ends of language learning; positive transfer is hard to distinguish from successful learning. Social and pragmatic norms which are part of learners' background knowledge may transfer as well as phonological or syntactic features: interlanguage pragmatics is thus affected by pragmatic transfer.

An ambitious project has been set up to study the realization of requests and apologies among native speakers and learners of several languages: the Cross-Cultural Speak Act Realization Project (CCSARP). It involves the comparison of speech acts across cultures and the comparison of NS/NNS realizations in each language. Researchers on this project have conducted several studies and developed a discourse completion task for the elicitation of data and a coding system for the analysis of speech acts.

Research findings in interlanguage pragmatics present a complex picture because they deal with variation over specific situations; however, some generalizations can be made. Nonnative speakers at intermediate or advanced levels (most of the subjects) show similar behavior to native speakers in the range of forms they use for requests, that is, they know how to make many kinds of requests. They differ from native speakers, however, in the preferential choice and distribution of forms across situations, with situational variables including social distance and status, and in some studies, age and gender which

may influence the first two. These findings are similar to those in first language acquisition: the mastery of linguistic forms comes before the ability to apply them appropriately. In addition, NNSs do not always vary in the same way from NSs and sometimes produce language which is not typical of either their L1 or L2. One example is the amount of talk in requests, which in some situations is significantly greater among L2 speakers than among native speakers of either language.

In pursuing mastery of the social, linguistic and pragmatic rules of the target culture, learners face three possible conflicts: between the strategies expected in L1 and L2 in a given situation; between the linguistic forms used to realize similar strategies in L1 and L2; and between different illocutionary forces attached to similar forms in L1 and L2. Since, as we have seen before, expectation plays an important role in determining politeness, deviation from expected strategies can cause pragmatic failure. Similarly, the use of too different a linguistic form to realize a strategy may result in insufficient attention to culturally important features of the situation. Even in cases where languages used directly translated forms, their illocutionary force may be broadly or subtly different, resulting in a failure to convey requestive intent.

The interaction of L1 and L2 is proposed as an explanation for many of the differences found between NNS and NSs in the IL pragmatic literature; its cross-cultural comparative base provides a wealth of information about pragmatic norms in several languages. The content, lexis and social sensitivity of IL speech acts have been shown to reflect L1 norms; these of course may be similar to, or quite different from L2 norms, and

differences may be important or unimportant, with correspondingly varying degrees of pragmatic difficulty for NNSs. While very little is known about NNSs beyond the advanced student stage, it appears that an "intercultural style" develops among those comfortable in more than one language and culture, indicating reciprocal influences of L1 and L2. In the few studies that have considered proficiency level and length of stay, proficiency has been found to relate to certain aspects of IL behavior, but length of stay seems more closely connected to native-like language use.

The research findings reported here represent a great deal of work and a substantial advance over our knowledge of ten years ago, but it seems that every answer brings more questions. The number of situational variables that could be used, for example, is enormous, and the interaction of so many variables makes any progress seem impossible. Research questions, therefore, focus on one small point at a time, which may result in a slanted outlook in the field. For example, most of the studies reported here use elicited data and student subjects from a few related language backgrounds. These are serious shortcomings if we hope for generalizable results, but in addition to their specific findings, such studies point the way to the next sample population, the next language group, the next speech event. Methodological concerns will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

COMPARISON OF L1 AND L2 ACQUISITION OF DIRECTIVES

In this chapter I will compare L1 and L2 acquisition of directives on the basis of what is known about each as reviewed in the previous two chapters. First I will present some background on comparisons of first and second language acquisition, and pose two questions relevant to the present comparisons. Then, based on IL pragmatics literature, I will discuss what comparisons we can make of L1 and L2 processes and of NS and NNS language use. Finally, I will discuss one account of language acquisition from the literature and its relevance to some of the points raised in the comparisons.

Background

Comparisons of first and second language acquisition have traditionally been undertaken to examine what is known about the *processes* of acquisition in L1 and L2 with a view to furthering understanding of one or both languages or processes. First it would be instructive to consider briefly previous approaches to comparisons of L1 and L2 with respect to two questions: what have the comparisons yielded, and what information has been used to make the comparisons?

Comparisons of L1 and L2 Acquisition

Early comparative studies dealt with the influence of one language on another in subjects learning a second or subsequent language and yielded complex results (e.g., Weinrich, 1953; Haugen, 1954, cited in Bialystok, 1993). Later studies such as Dulay and Burt (1974), cited earlier, compared syntax acquisition in first and second language with a view to evaluating the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) which had become influential in the meantime. Dulay and Burt found that interference, or transfer, did not account for all child L2 errors and that developmental patterns similar to L1 acquisition accounted for a substantial number of unambiguous errors. They hypothesized a similarity between first and second language acquisition sometime called the L1=L2, or developmental hypothesis. (Ervin-Tripp (1974) also addressed this question and found interesting similarities as well.) While this left a great many questions unanswered, it indicated that the process of first language acquisition in general and the acquisition of specific languages might shed some light on second language acquisition. Comparisons of L1 and L2 yield relational results: both transfer and developmental theories involve both languages, but suggest different relationships between them, giving rise to different theoretical stances. Some researchers have compared first and second languages to see what learners will transfer (what difficulties they are likely to experience from negative transfer, or interference and perhaps what facility they are likely to enjoy from positive transfer). Others have looked at what stages of acquisition L2 learners are likely to go

through as they follow a process more or less like that of first language acquisition, depending on the theoretical stance of the investigator.

It is interesting to note that Dulay and Burt (1983) find that both the CAH and the L1=L2 hypotheses account for part of the data available, and that the CAH accounts for some *adult* data in the literature while the L1=L2 hypothesis seems better able to account for the child data on which their own work is largely based. While we are considering adult SLA in this paper, the Dulay and Burt studies are important and must be considered; they suggest possible differences among L1, child L2 and adult L2 acquisition. Comparisons of L1 and adult L2 acquisition must deal with the differences between child and adult processes; the difference between what will account for adult versus child data is therefore important and will be considered later in this chapter. In summary, comparative studies have yielded some interesting similarities between patterns of L1 and L2 acquisition, especially among children, and substantial differences as well. It is not my purpose here to discuss child versus adult L2, but some discussion of differences in (language) learning between children and adults will be necessary to my thesis. At this point, it is important to ask whether similarities in child L1 and L2 acquisition are due to language universals, something intrinsic to the language, or to general learning and development patterns characteristic of children.

More recent comparisons of L1 and L2 have begun to explore what, if any, light the similarities and differences in these two processes can shed on the role of universals, such as Universal Grammar (UG) and age in SLA. Clahsen (1990) for example, suggests

a fundamental difference between L1 and adult L2 acquisition on the grounds that adult L2 learners do not have UG available to them in the same way that children do in acquiring L1. White (1990) also examines literature on L2 performance by speakers of various L1s and attempts to determine the availability of UG to adult learners. This research has shown mixed results and left the issue unresolved. These studies include treatments of and references to the role of UG in language acquisition and Chomsky's Government Binding theory, subjects which are outside the scope of this paper. For the topic under discussion, the point here is that in syntax, morphology and phonology, comparisons of L1 and L2 have been made in order to test such hypotheses as the CAH and various forms of L1=L2. To my knowledge, none of these studies has undermined either hypothesis; there is some evidence for each in the data presented or the studies reviewed. Hecht and Mulford (1987) for example, suggest that while the phonological system may be acquired similarly to L1, there is influence from the L2 and it is not as straightforward as simple transfer, but rather interactional, involving such factors as phoneme position and markedness. Also certain trade-offs may occur, so that phonemes successfully used in one task may be more difficult in another requiring attention to other language features. Similarly Takashima (1992) in a general case study of a Japanese child found that transfer explained some phenomena while L1 processes explained others, and suggested a combined, interactional explanation.

What information is necessary to make comparisons of this type between L1 and L2? First, it is necessary to have a substantial body of knowledge about L1 acquisition of

the relevant language structures. Second, it is necessary to have at least a sufficient, and a sufficiently representative, body of knowledge about L2 acquisition of the same structures. The growth of child language studies in the 1960s provided a large body of data in the area of syntax and morphology and detailed accounts of the order of acquisition of syntactic structures and morphemes in English was available. These data could then be compared with data for various groups of children learning ESL. Similar extensive knowledge of the acquisition of the English sound system made possible comparisons such as Hecht and Mulford (1987) in which L1 influence, or transfer, and developmental patterns are assessed in the phonology of an Icelandic-speaking child learning English.

How does this relate to our ability to make such a comparison between L1 and L2 in the acquisition of directives? First, comparisons require an extensive body of knowledge about L1 acquisition; we have, in fact, a good start in this area, as was mentioned as one of the reasons for choosing directives as a topic. In addition, such a body of research generates continued work, as it gives rise to more detailed and complex questions. Second, comparisons require a similarly extensive body of knowledge in the L2 area. Leaving aside the question of whether earlier comparisons in syntax and phonology were made on sufficient bases, do we know enough about directive acquisition to make profitable comparisons? And is this generalizable to pragmatics to a sufficient extent to make it worth doing?

In answer to the first question, we certainly have a considerable body of data, analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively, in the literature on L1 acquisition and on IL

directives. There are serious questions about the representative quality of this data, which will be discussed in the next chapter, but the amount of information and the general quality of its collection and treatment are considerable. In regard to the second question, both in this paper and in several of the studies reviewed, the argument has been put forward that directives are quite demanding pragmatically and also highly salient for learners and teachers due to their frequent use. Both these points make information on this particular speech act highly useful, both specifically and generally in IL pragmatics, and comparisons of L1 and L2 behavior and NS and NNS behavior potentially fruitful.

Pragmatic Universals

As mentioned earlier, one focus of L1-L2 comparisons has been the search for and elucidation of language universals. Can a comparison of L1 and L2 acquisition shed any light on the existence and nature of such universals in pragmatics? The term pragmatic universals is used to refer to notions or strategies used across languages to accomplish pragmatic ends. Whether we are talking about general notions, such as politeness or context-sensitivity, or strategies, such as indirectness, or the application of certain notions in certain contexts, of course, makes a difference, and this is the problem we face in the IL pragmatic literature, with what discussion there is of universals being somewhat diffuse. Bialystok (1993) has cited Fraser (1985) as positing pragmatic universals and Wierzbicka (1985) as opposing their existence, with the literature generally favoring Fraser. This is something of an oversimplification, although useful for illustration. Blum-Kulka (1983),

for example, whose work figures prominently in this literature, states that Fraser's universals are too general and that the language and culture specific forms embodying them vitiate any useful generalizability they might have; she does not refer at all, however, to Wiersbicka as an alternative, and in fact uses the sorts of notions she ascribes to Fraser in her discussions and explanations. This would seem to indicate a general position in the literature which is somewhat more complex than a simple plus-minus dichotomy on the existence of pragmatic universals: some points of comparability must exist to make cross-cultural comparisons *possible*, but considerable differences must exist to make them *necessary*. This is a subject about which more research is consistently recommended.

Whether or nor pragmatic universals exist across languages is of interest to our topic because if they do they may have a strong influence on the acquisition of pragmatic skills, just as it is posited that UG features influence the acquisition of grammar across languages. The influence of universals on second language learning by adults would be another question. As stated above, while the implicit assumption of certain similarities and differences across languages underlies a good deal of the work in this area, most of the work is aimed at comparing the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural realizations of these pragmatic values, rather than at proving their existence.

It is tempting to suggest that if we could describe pragmatic values, skills or strategies used across cultures we might be able to inventory their acquisition over time, much as grammatical and phonological features have been studied. The use of such inventories of discrete skills makes straightforward comparison feasible, as several

comparisons of L1 and (usually child) L2 show. It is doubtful that we can make meaningful comparisons of this type in pragmatics, for the following reasons:

1. First language studies have not revealed pragmatics to be amenable to this type of analysis, i.e., the identification and ordering of discrete recognizable features and skills. Intuitively, it seems reasonable to attribute this to the nature of pragmatics as highly context-based and including social, cognitive and linguistic skills.

2. Very few L2 or cross-cultural pragmatic studies are developmental, i.e., very few use a longitudinal or pseudo-longitudinal design or identify proficiency level or length of stay as a variable. This may be attributable to the following factors: first, many studies use a large-sample, DCT format and the most available population is university students who may not show a wide range of proficiency; second, the assessment or performance of pragmatic tasks at levels which it is practical to compare with the L1 may require minimum levels of proficiency; third, the number of factors involved in pragmatic studies is very large, and every possible variable cannot be included. Some of these points will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Possible Comparisons

Comparison of L1 and L2 Acquisition of Directives

What kind of comparison can we make then, between L1 and L2 acquisition of directives? Based on the research presented in the previous two chapters we see what

may look like a confusing picture. Children seem to acquire directives along two axes of linguistic and social skill, more or less simultaneously. They show good mastery of a wide range of basic forms and sensitivity to addressee during the preschool years. Linguistic development expands their repertoires, while cognitive and social development enhances their ability to adjust their requests for the difficulty involved and for different responses, as they are better able to see the situation from another point of view. While there is evidence of over generalization, on the whole children become more polite, more sensitive to context and more pragmatically successful over time. They become increasingly adept at using indirection, and while they become less context-bound in their requests and interpretations, they are better able to call on appropriate shared or background knowledge.

Adult language learners show some similar features in their acquisition of directives. The most obvious of these is the importance of context and this is even greater for the L2 situation than the L1. Language learners already have a whole system of context sensitivity in place in their first culture, and they are assimilating a parallel system in their new culture. Since all new knowledge is processed in terms of old knowledge, these two systems will interact, and as proficiency and experience increase, the learner develops a continually changing IL system on which pragmatic performance is based.

Adult language learners, on the other hand, do *not* show so clear a unidirectional development as children do. At intermediate proficiency levels, they too show command of a range of directive forms comparable to NSs. They show a different pattern than

children, however, and different patterns across groups of learners with respect to the other characteristics discussed above. Linguistic, social and cognitive development do not proceed together, and this is probably at the root of differences between L1 and L2 acquisition. Adults have a wealth of general linguistic knowledge and specific strategies at their disposal for making requests; they are no longer egocentric and have well-developed senses of social relationships and the imposition involved in requests. What they are learning is the applicability of what they already know to new situations and the linguistic realizations those situations require. As with children, there is some evidence of over generalization and U-shaped learning, but we cannot say that learners become, for example, progressively more indirect.

Both these summaries involve comparisons with an end-point or standard. In the case of children acquiring directives, there is an implicit comparison with adult speech acts. This is the tacitly assumed end-point of their development, and one with which I think no one would argue. The NNSs, on the other hand are implicitly or explicitly compared with NSs; native speaker behavior is the tacitly assumed standard, if not the actual end point, of their development. This is a point with which it seems more legitimate to take issue. From the perspective of this paper, if we are looking for a pattern of L1 and L2 development, we need end points to define trends or directions. Many of the studies reviewed here have cross-cultural comparisons as part of their purpose and IL descriptions as another part. From the pedagogical viewpoint, we may admit NS proficiency as a legitimate, if not always realized, goal, but from the viewpoint of

descriptive linguistics, the adoption of NS behavior to define the direction of learner development seems to need at least acknowledgment, if not justification. The lack of a realistic picture of highly proficient NNS behavior is one of the largest lacunae in this literature.

The question of NS norms brings us up against one of the fundamental questions in this field. As Rose (1994a) asks, "Just whose pragmatic system is to be taught? (52)" Rose raises this question in an EFL context, and similar questions have been raised in the World English literature. While we might think it does not apply in ESL contexts, the phenomenon of transfer as a means of maintaining cultural identity illustrates the complexity of even the ESL situation. For this reason, several suggestions have been heard in recent years for explicit discussion of pragmatic issues in the classroom, not prescriptive teaching of "polite" forms, but discussion of the socially meaningful features of a given situation in a given culture and the language choices available. I will discuss this idea of explicit discussion, or consciousness-raising, in Chapter 5.

Comparison of NS and NNS Use of Directives

The comparison of L1 and L2 acquisition of directives shows not a startling set of instructive parallels, but a more mundane picture of some similarities and some differences between L1 and L2. This is intuitively acceptable, as there are certainly obvious similarities and differences in the situations of L1 and adult L2 learners. NNS/NS comparisons serve many of the purposes of this area of research well. While we are

limited in what we know about NNS development because of the lack of longitudinal or multi-level cross-sectional data, what we can see shows a different pattern from that of child L1 acquisition. In the IL pragmatic literature we see a number of areas in which differences between L1 and L2 behavior can occur, some of which open this possibility for serious misunderstandings, or *communication failures*. With communicative competence the most widely accepted goal of language education at the moment, this type of comparison is useful; in this sense NS behavior makes a suitable point of comparison, because it characterizes the communication setting in which the NNS is seeking to function.

NNSs differ from NSs in several ways. For example, the last chapter showed German learners of English to be somewhat more direct as a rule in realizing both L1 and L2 directives than NSs, while Americans learning Hebrew may use a somewhat less direct style than the target culture, but more direct than NS of English. While both groups of learners may be said to be approaching target culture behavior, one group will become more indirect while the other will become more direct as they do so. Within groups of learners of the same language, we see the same situation. In some situations, (and again learners show a high degree of sensitivity to situation) German learners of English may need to use less direct requests to approximate NS behavior while Japanese learners may need to use more direct requests. In perception of the situation and its requirements, in choice of appropriate request strategy and in linguistic realization of that strategy, the native and target languages and cultures interact.

As should be clear by now, the direction of successful L2 development will be toward the target language and, to a greater or lesser extent, toward the target culture. We might say this is similar to the L1 situation, in which we can identify adult behavior as the ultimate end of child language acquisition. But, whereas children all start out in similarly naive prelinguistic states with synchronous early cognitive and social developmental levels, adult learners start out with a huge variety of different individual, linguistic and cultural characteristics. Children learning their L1 are going through a complete developmental process of which language development and the social and cognitive development which impinge on it are aspects. They acquire all sorts of knowledge from the experiences of living in their culture and we can see adult behavior as a logical end-point in considering their development because adults are what they will become in the natural order of things. Adult language learners, on the other hand, are consciously attempting to progress toward the same adult L2 behavior as the children (although they may have ambivalent feelings toward the target culture), but have started from a vastly different point; proficiency in the L2 is not a necessarily assumed part of the picture of their ultimate development in the natural order of things.

An Analogy

We might think of this in terms of traveling to or living in a city. Children growing up in New York will become adult New Yorkers in the course of time, with all the knowledge entailed in the experience of growing up there. People from other parts of the

country or the world will become adult New Yorkers only by undertaking to go there to live. Which direction this process will take will depend on where they are coming from: southerners will need to move north, westerners, east, etc. While there may certainly be more than one route from a given point, there is not one set of directions which will work for everyone. In the same way, NNS will move toward their target languages and cultures along a variety of routes, influenced by many factors, fundamentally determined by where they started, but not amenable to a high degree of systematic predictability.

There might be some who wish to visit New York regularly, or even live there, and move comfortably in the local culture, but not "become" New Yorkers, i.e., not become too native-like. Accent might be one way to retain individuality and identity. Likewise in language learning, there is sometimes a conscious or unconscious tendency to retain some elements of native language or culture. Pragmatics is a good candidate for this retention, or transfer: it permeates social life, but includes non-linguistic features and so is partially protected from the necessities of accommodating to the L2 culture. This is an analogy of a basic difference between L1 and L2 learning which I believe is borne out by the evidence on pragmatic acquisition reviewed in this paper.

Some comparisons of L1 and L2 have as their focus isolating *linguistic* features, language characteristics or learning processes by finding them in both situations. In our analogy, these might be compared to geographical realities such as the absolute position of New York City and one's point of departure, the distance between them and the existence of intervening mountains, oceans, etc., and such physical realities as the necessity of

covering all the space between the points of departure and arrival, the requirement that energy must be expended to move from one point to another, etc. These will certainly determine the course of travel to a large extent. There are many other factors as well, however, which will determine the success of the enterprise: mode of transportation, resources of time and energy available, previous travel experience, map-reading ability or sense of direction, or a preference for consistent goal-oriented progress or interesting side trips. These might be compared to the individual characteristics of each learner's situation and personality such as motivation, learning style and strategies, and previous experience.

Analysis of Knowledge and Control of Attention

This view of L1 and L2 as substantially different is reflected in several approaches to comparisons in the literature: the "fundamental difference hypothesis" of researchers in UG (Clahsen 1990), the information processing approach of Kennedy (1988) and the cognitive learning approach of Ellen Bialystok (1991, 1993). If L1 and L2 acquisition are so different, of what value is our comparison? Through a comparison of L1 and L2 *behavior* we have been able to see a comparison of *processes.* Bialystok's cognitive approach identifies these processes and provides a clear explanation which, while not complete, fits the picture we have of pragmatic acquisition.

Bialystok (1991, 1993) discusses the roles of two "processing components" in language learning: analysis and control (1993, 49). The first of these deals with "making explicit, or analyzing, a learner's implicit knowledge of a domain," while the second refers

to "controlling attention to relevant and appropriate information and integrating those forms in real time (48)." Analysis of knowledge involves the development and elaboration of mental representations at increasingly abstract levels: conceptual, formal and symbolic representation (49). Bialystok contends that adult language learners come to their task with a great deal of linguistic knowledge already analyzed -- for example, the relation of form and meaning, discourse organization, concepts of politeness, even the correspondence between the L1 and L2 -- and are ready to deal with the new knowledge at the formal and symbolic levels, which they do relatively easily having already attained these skills. Their main task then, is attentional control: attending to what is important, selecting what is appropriate to the situation, and meeting the demands of real speech events. This is not to minimize the task facing second language learners, but to illustrate the nature of its difference from that facing first language learners, a difference which this approach shows to be directly related to the adults' levels of linguistic, social and cognitive development.

Bialystok's framework helps explain something often noted in L1-L2 comparisons: that while there are some similarities there are also important differences. Rather than simply ascribing the similarities to the fact that both involve learning language and the differences simply to age, this approach specifies the psychological skills involved, showing why some developmental features will be the same while others will differ. In addition, this approach accommodates the notion of transfer, or the incorporation of L1 knowledge. While generally facilitative in the sense of providing a great deal of

background to the learner, it can create difficulties in two areas. Learners may analyze L1 or L2 knowledge incorrectly due to L1 influence, and L1 routines may "win out" over different L2 requirements in situations where there are many claims on the learners attentional control. Thus transfer is shown not to be a single process, but to operate in different areas of language learning and use. Finally, Bialystok's approach provides some of the clearest direction for pedagogical considerations in the IL field, as it specifies skills which can be practiced and assessed and relates them to learner goals.

Summary

Comparisons of first and second language acquisition in syntax and phonology have been undertaken to further our understanding of the acquisition process. They have yielded insights into the developmental nature of language learning and challenges to the notion that all L2 errors come from the influence of L1. In addition, they have shown what is required to make such comparisons: substantial knowledge of both L1 and L2 acquisition of particular features. While we have a substantial literature on L1 and adult L2 acquisition of directives, it is unlikely that we can make the same sorts of comparisons as have been made in syntax and phonology for two reasons: pragmatic skills are not amenable to analysis into discrete units like morphemes and phonemes, and we have very little longitudinal information about adult L2 acquisition of directives. We can, however, make some useful observations.

Like interlanguage, child language is a systematic, continually changing approximation of a target, in this case adult language. Both sets of learners, L1 and L2, will deviate from the target in some ways, and it is helpful to know if we can predict what those ways will be. On the basis of the literature reviewed there seem to be two similarities between L1 and L2 acquisition of directives. First, both groups show general learning behavior, such as over generalization, that is, behavior which overshoots the target in intensity or distribution and is later adjusted. Second, both groups seem to acquire linguistic forms first and rules of social appropriateness later.

Unlike children, adult L2 learners have been enculturated: they have a complete linguistic and cultural background in place. Everything they learn will be processed through this background. In many ways, this facilitates language learning: they have metalinguistic and metapragmatic knowledge to apply to the task, for example, the knowledge that contextual features such as the social distance and status of participants will influence politeness in conversations. Sometimes this background gets in the way, when L2 norms are either too different to be accommodated by the L1 system or too similar to be discriminated from it. In addition, learners will need to discover what new information they need; they may know *that* social distance influences politeness requirements, but need to learn exactly *how* in a given context, and how to meet those requirements appropriately in the L2.

In addition to comparing L1 and L2 acquisition, we can compare the language behavior of NSs and NNSs. This may enable us to identify potential pitfalls learners

encounter and target these in the classroom. Comparison of NS and NNS directives across several languages reveals that directness is an important feature: it is pragmatically salient and varies across both NS and NNS use in different situations. While it is possible to say that, in general, German NS are more direct than English NS, the picture is complicated by additional factors such as cultural perceptions of rights and obligation, status and social distance. As it is simply not the case that one form is always polite or correct, and therefore appropriate to teach, it would seem more productive to use learners' metalinguistic skills to make these cultural and linguistic differences explicit.

This raises an important point in language teaching. Unlike children learning their first language, L2 learners are operating under two systems of cultural and linguistic norms. Which will predominate in a given setting can have a profound impact on learning, and for those in-country, on their whole experience of the target culture and success in whatever endeavor has brought them there.

Finally, a cognitive approach to language learning is cited to elucidate the processes ofL1 and L2 acquisition by specifying the skills involved. Second language learners, according to Bialystok (1993), can call on their background for analyzing knowledge of the new language having already worked through conceptual and formal representation of language. The next step in analysis of knowledge is symbolic representation, and the other part of learning is attentional control. This framework helps us understand the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 and raises important pedagogical implications.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS, PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The previous three chapters have presented summaries and comparisons of research findings on first and second language acquisition of directives. In reporting or evaluating findings I have commented on research methods, noted sources of knowledge and relevant pedagogy, and raised or reported unanswered questions in assessing the scope of knowledge available. In this chapter, I will expand on these three concerns.

Methodological Considerations

Three methodological considerations seem paramount in considering IL pragmatics research, particularly in attempted comparison with L1 acquisition studies. The first two of these, data collection and sample population, are fairly specific, while the third, diversity of approach, is more general. While it is possible to find several different types of data collection methods in the literature, a high percentage of studies use a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) or role plays or both. In a review of IL pragmatics research methods, Kasper and Dahl (1991) showed the vast majority (31) of the thirty-nine studies reviewed used only elicited data and five additional studies combined elicited and observational data. Only two studies used the observation of authentic speech; neither

was a study of directives. Rose (1994 a) points out that despite the acknowledged limitations of elicited data, it continues to be heavily used in this field.

Data Collection

As noted in Chapter 2, Elinor Ochs (1979) credits child language research with offering to the field of linguistics a broad, multi-disciplinary research tradition. The studies reviewed in that chapter include case studies, observational studies of natural language in home and laboratory settings and elicitation studies using a variety of techniques, e.g., puppets, narratives and pictures. The presumed advantage of this breadth and variety is that different methods will compensate for one another's shortcomings. For example, observation in natural settings may reduce the task effect or anxiety associated with a more experimental approach, while elicitation procedures ensure a larger number of tokens of target behavior than naturalistic studies will yield in the same time, and experimental studies allow careful control of specific variables.

The field of IL pragmatics, on the other hand, offers a more limited range of research methods. The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project, for example, which includes a large number of the studies reviewed, uses a written (DCT). This method of data collection has disadvantages and advantages which are of importance for assessment of work to date and directions of future research.

Disadvantages of the DCT

The first disadvantage of the DCT is that the data it collects are what people say they would say, rather than what they, in fact, say in a given situation. This criticism is based on the assumed superiority of natural, authentic speech as the ideal data for descriptive linguistics. Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) compared natural data to those obtained using DCTs in advising sessions and found that the DCT "disallows certain common negotiation strategies, it eliminates certain semantic formulas, and it influences the politeness and status-balancing profiles of the students (49)." Likewise, Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) found thanking expressions elicited using a DCT to be shorter than those using role plays, which in turn were shorter than natural data.

Another disadvantage of the DCT is that it is written: while subjects are asked what they would *say*, they *write* their answers. The medium may have some effect on the responses, as may the time allowed for reflection on a written task. Rintell and Mitchell (1989) compared written DCTs with role plays of similar situations and found that while both NNS and NSs were able to write in spoken style, apparently overcoming that particular medium effect, that NNSs produced significantly longer oral than written responses, an effect that was not found for NSs. This is an important finding both as it relates to our picture of NNS requests and as it affects the comparison with NS requests.

A third disadvantage of the DCT is that it does not provide the same options as real conversations. For example, in a real conversation, the speaker making a request may have a realistic expectation of the likelihood the hearer will comply, based on relationships

and previous experience. While this might be specified in DCT scenarios, as far as I know they have not been in the CCSARP situations. Some of the situations themselves provide some indication of the cost, or imposition, of the request and whether the speaker has a right to make it and/or the hearer an obligation to comply. For example, a policeman asking a woman to move her car is clearly making a high-right, high-obligation request. Rose (1992) used a DCT with a reply provided to let the subject know the result of the request, but this did not yield significantly different results than the DCT without reply.

Another real conversation option missing from the DCT is the null option, that is the possibility that a subject simply would not make a request in the situation described. Rose and Ono (1994) found a significant use of the null option among their Japanese subjects in some situations, even when the situations had been adjusted to reflect Japanese culture. (The CCSARP situation in which the subject is to request a roommate to clean up the kitchen, for example, was not considered productive, since most Japanese students live with their families.) In other words, the picture of request behavior overall was significantly different with the null option provided than that obtained without it, though the latter may have provided a good idea of the proficiency and preferred style of the subjects in making requests.

Advantages of the DCT

At the same time, there are advantages to the written DCT. First of all, it provides a larger amount of data and a greater possibility of controlling for variables than natural

data collection could ever do. This means investigators have more tokens of the speech acts under consideration, making possible more complex comparisons and statistical analyses. In studying a particular speech act, more consideration may be given at times to eliciting and examining the performance of that act than to questions of realistic description of general language use. In other words, for a particular research question, it may not matter how realistic the language elicited is as long as it exhibits L2 speakers' use of requests. As Becker (1991) points out about child language studies, elicited and natural data complement one another, the first showing what people can do, and the second showing what they, in fact, do.

In some types of investigations, the enormous variety of forms produced and variables operating across situations make the isolation of certain variables nearly impossible given the length of time and amount of effort required to collect natural data. For example, when looking at behavior by speakers of several L1s across situations in which status and social distance are varied, (as in the CCSARP) it would be hard to overestimate the difficulty of collecting a comparable amount of natural data. If the collection method is not thought to compromise the data too seriously, these are strong considerations in its favor.

There is a theoretical advantage claimed for the written DCT as well. While it specifies certain aspects of the situation, the absence of an overwhelming number of individual variables and the somewhat constrained response (one conversational turn) are expected to yield *prototypical* responses (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989b). It is

claimed that these show more clearly the basic elements of the request and how they are ordered and distributed across situations and are thus well suited to examining situational variation of language among both NSs and NNSs. There are three questions that arise here:

Does this type of data collection yield different data than other types?

Is this type of data more useful for particular research designs than other types?

How does the data elicited relate to real language use and learning?

Broadening data collection methods and comparing results may help answer these questions.

Observation of Natural Speech

In comparing various data collection methods, the standard recommendation in the literature is for a combination of methods. Kasper and Dahl (1991) give several reasons for this recommendation: different types of data collection will yield more authentic data, allow methodological comparisons and enable researchers to exploit "the specific contributions of different data collection techniques to different research issues (245)." First language studies may offer some practical suggestions for carrying out this recommendation. One type of observation which seems very practical in first language research is the observation of children in natural (play) situations. This is probably less practical in research with adults because there are not nearly as many institutionalized

situations in which adults can be regularly observed as for children, e.g., preschools. The task will be somewhat more challenging, then, but not impossible.

Two approaches to natural observation are possible: new situations can be created or existing situations exploited. Robbins and Nagano (1994), for example, set up conversations between a NS and NNS and analyzed two conversations between each pair. The problem of self-consciousness in a research setting may be limiting in studies of this type, but subjects do become acclimated to the situation, and there is the possibility of using already extant and comfortably functioning groups, such as conversation groups for English learners, for such observations. Nevertheless, this type of observation is costly and time-consuming.

Exploiting existing situations entails observation of events which occur in any event or multiple use of observations which are already being made. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990, 1991), for example, have compared the language of NSs and NNSs in academic advising sessions. The language is natural, but the setting provides certain constraints and expectations which both limit the data and provide a test of pragmatic competence. Similarly culturally constrained settings such as doctor visits have also been investigated (see, e.g., Ranney, 1992). An example of extant data that might be amenable to speech act analysis is the classroom speech of international teaching assistants (ITAs). ITA training programs on campuses throughout the United States commonly use videotaped classroom interaction for both teaching and research purposes. Most analyses of this material focus on pedagogical techniques and general social and pragmatic

functions rather than on specific speech acts (see, e.g., Madden and Myers, 1994). The data, however, could be used by researchers interested in other facets of language use. In addition, the sample population is available for alternative collection methods, such as written DCTs or role plays using similar scenarios, for comparisons. This would supplement the small amount of work done to date in methodological comparison as well as broadening the research base on speech acts in interlanguage.

Sample Population

Another limitation in the literature is the sample population used for most of the studies reviewed. In both L1 and L2 studies, the academic setting in which the researchers work heavily influences the population from which subjects are drawn. The work of the Goodwins (Goodwin and Goodwin, 1980; Goodwin, 1987) on urban black children is notable for its location outside the academic sphere as well as for its ethnographic character, and there are occasional additional L1 studies which compare middle- and working-class children and families of different races (see, e.g., Snow et al., 1990), but many L1 studies have subjects described as white middle-class children. They probably attend schools or preschools in university areas, or perhaps even on university campuses, or are reachable as laboratory subjects through their parents. The age range is fairly well covered in the L1 studies of directives, with work spanning those ages in which directives are most actively developing. This age range is typical of language acquisition studies in general, however, and there may be areas in which more attention to

adolescents, who are sparsely represented in the literature, would be profitable. More socially oriented research could provide a rich source of natural data collected for other purposes from a more diverse sample population.

In the second language studies the sample population is even more limited: virtually all the studies reviewed use university students with mean ages in the twenties as subjects. This population represents an important group of language learners in many parts of the world, and is therefore a legitimate choice of both NS and NNS data, but the dangers of generalizing from this population are clear and the likelihood of generalization becomes greater as the body of research grows without the population broadening. The student population is young, educated, linguistically aware and, in the case of the learners, often in-country a relatively short time. The expansion of the population to include non-academic immigrant learners and non-student academics and professionals will enhance the picture we have of language learning.

The expansion of the sample population for second language studies to include long-time residents and proficient L2 speakers will also fill the void referred to in the discussion of the probable end-point of L2 learners. While it may be true that "you're never too old to learn," we establish various interim "end-points" in considering the development of any behavior. Kasper and Blum-Kulka's (1993) reference to an *intercultural style* used by speakers comfortable in two languages and cultures testifies to the recognition of the differences between proficient NSs and NNSs. Again, looking to

research in bilingualism might yield useful comparisons, research design elements and new data sources for IL studies.

Increasing the number of cultures and languages represented in IL pragmatics research would also be advantageous. The CCSARP includes several related languages, and Japanese and Spanish are represented in the literature as well, but only a handful of studies of other languages. Use of ITA data help toward this end as the current ITA population in the United States at this time is largely Asian. It would also allow inclusion of a population with a slightly wider age range and length of stay range, which might make more pseudo-longitudinal studies feasible.

Diversity of Approach

Data collection techniques and sample populations which allow a large body of data to be collected and careful control of variables are clearly advantageous to projects such as the CCSARP, which has cross-cultural comparison as a major purpose, and to other studies based on the comparison of IL behavior with both L1 and L2 data. The comparative stance of these studies seems to be an important factor in the choices of techniques and populations. Using different collection techniques and populations in similar studies will have clear costs in time, money and difficulty, but would make important contributions to the body of research in this field. Important contributions could be made by studies with a more ethnographic and descriptive approach. Not only would such studies focus on natural language, but they could include full descriptions of

the personal and situational features of the context so important to pragmatic judgments. These might make easier use of alternative collection techniques and populations and be suitable for integration with research in other, related disciplines. One example is the work on ITAs mentioned earlier. Analysis of ITA speech acts in classroom discourse contexts and the application of discourse analysis techniques would allow a broadening of the phenomena under investigation to entire speech *events*, as suggested by Blum-Kulka (1990). As with any study, there are constraints on the language used in the classroom situation and consequent limits to the generalizability of results, but there is a substantial body of work and vigorous research activity in the field of ITA training to which these suggested IL studies could also be connected.

Similarly, longitudinal studies, in which the performance of the same subjects is assessed on several occasions over time, would add to the usefulness of IL research. A pseudo-longitudinal approach could be substituted in which individuals at different levels are assessed until their performances begin to overlap with respect to the target behavior. A few studies have investigated proficiency level as a variable in an attempt to get at this developmental information. Takahashi and DuFon's (1989, cited in Kasper and Dahl, 1991, p. 238) study of Japanese ESL learners for example, showed efficient formulation and success of requests to vary directly with proficiency level. Nevertheless, the assumption that proficiency level will be a meaningful parameter with regard to a particular behavior requires additional support. In fact, in the case of Blum-Kulka (1983), proficiency level and length of stay were shown to have different influences on verbosity,

with length of stay showing a closer approach to native-like behavior. The difficulties of research logistics may also tempt us to read more into results based on two observations than is warranted: if we are looking for developmental trends, we will need several replications, or tests, in order to draw conclusions. The increase and subsequent decrease in politeness among school age children shows the danger of identifying a straight path between any two points as the path of development. In general, great care must be taken in the application of research methods borrowed from other fields in the service of making linguistics more "scientific," particularly quantitative analysis (Rose 1994b).

At the Eighth Annual International Conference on Pragmatics and Language Learning (April 1994) there were repeated calls for a more "ecumenical" approach to pragmatics research, particularly with regard to data collection and analysis (e.g., Rose, 1994b). Almost every study reviewed in this paper, covering a period of more than ten years, has called for more, and more types of research in this area. The comments made above on the limitations of methods and populations are not aimed at one study or method, but at the fact that one type of approach so dominates the field, in spite of past, and more vocal present calls for diversification. There is a synergistic effect in academic research, as in many other areas, which causes what works to be repeated: successful, influential research contributes not only results, but outlooks, to its field. IL pragmatics research has a solid base from which to expand; the area of L1 studies, with its diverse research tradition, holds out the promise of a well-documented and well-integrated body of research as a realistic result.

Pedagogical Implications

From the comparison of L1 and L2 acquisition which we have been able to make despite dissimilarities in the type of results available, two points stand out for their potential pedagogical implications. The first of these is a point of similarity between first and second language acquisition as shown in this comparison: the importance of context. The second is a point of dissimilarity: the high degree of linguistic and social experience and awareness second language learners bring to their task, and the pedagogical potential of these skills.

The Importance of Context

In first language acquisition context plays several basic roles. This is not surprising, as language is learned for and by use in specific settings. In the first place, language grows out of action in context. Children's directives begin with mutual attention-focusing strategies such as eye contact with another person, and proceed through gestural indications of intent accompanied by vocalization before attaining the full form of a locution. Context and accompanying action often minimize the amount of talk needed for directives as participants assume joint goals and act to achieve them. Likewise, children's interpretation of requests is heavily dependent on context; most researchers in this field, for example, reject the literal processing approach to indirect speech acts, claiming that a combination of conventional directive use and context makes the requestive interpretation likely to be first. Finally, as children develop cognitively, they

become less context bound in their uses on language. At the same time, however, they become aware of ambiguous possibilities in structures like indirect requests, and more able to use context in communicating their intentions.

We have a situation, then, in which much of what is learned and how it is learned is dependent on context: not only must there be a context -- all language occurs in some context -- but there must be a direct connection between the context and the language skills being learned. Children do not learn "to request" but "to request thing or action X of person Y in setting Z." Further learning requires generalization and differentiation of these skills as more requests and situations are encountered.

In the second language classroom, this feature of first language acquisition could be simulated by use of real, or realistic, request situations in which the student becomes a progressively more active participant as L2 proficiency increases. This inductive approach would have two advantages for language learners beyond the very beginning levels. First, they would be exposed to a variety of request forms which would enhance their receptive skills even before it influenced their production. Second, their adult linguistic and cognitive abilities would be fully engaged in the task of identifying and classifying relevant contextual and linguistic features of the situation. In addition, this data-driven approach fits the learning styles of some individuals better than a rule-driven approach, so that, when used to supplement other classroom methods, it would broaden the effective student audience.

The challenges in implementing this incorporation of real contexts are twofold: identifying relevant contexts for specific student populations, and finding ways to immerse students in these contexts or realistic simulations. The first is a familiar task in any pedagogical undertaking; the second might be met by bringing the world into the classroom and by bringing the classroom out into the world. By "bringing the world into the classroom" I mean incorporating a high contextual component into classroom communicative tasks, providing real, as well as realistic, settings. These might be social or community settings, workplace or academic settings. Recognition of the importance of context lends further support to the inclusion of "real" communicative tasks across the language learning curriculum. Students who are writing real shopping lists, thank you notes, letters of application or progress reports, or who are giving and receiving real telephone messages, cooking instructions, compliments or laboratory directions, are more involved than students doing an assignment in a text, no matter how realistic. The fundamental importance of what students are actually doing at a given moment to what they are learning cannot be overstated.

In addition to real world experiences, students need opportunities for structured practice. Many texts now include realistic assignments, and these provide excellent practice and are a necessity in the collapsed time frame of second language instruction: there is not time to have all the experiences necessary to learn everything "in context." Similarly, interactive electronic media offer opportunities for students to view and practice many situations. One of the overwhelming aspects of studying or teaching pragmatics is

the enormous number of variables operating in every situation, and the complex interactions among them. Computer technology offers exciting possibilities for varying situations by changing specific features and assessing the appropriateness of different linguistic choices.

Another way to further contextualize language learning is to bring the classroom out into the world. Students can be led to make explicit connections between the experiences they have outside the classroom and what they learn within it. By collecting and analyzing the language they will then practice and learn, teachers and students can extend their classroom into the world beyond, and the number of contexts they can learn about will be substantially increased. One asset adult L2 learners and their teachers have is a considerable degree of linguistic and metalinguistic knowledge. Sharwood Smith (1981) explained the advantage formal instruction offers by bringing the knowledge to bear in conscious attention to L2 features. The colloquium on Consciousness-raising (CR) in second language pedagogy at the 26th Annual TESOL Convention (1992) attests to the interest in this approach. There have been several recent calls for a similar consciousness-raising approach to pragmatics (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989b; Rose, 1994).

The Potential of Consciousness-Raising

The importance and power of learners' conscious attention is a basic premise of Bialystok's (1991, 1993) account of language learning, which involves the elements of

analysis of knowledge and control of attention. The highest level of analysis of knowledge is symbolic representation, which involves some degree of metalinguistic awareness, and this is the level at which adult learners are operating as they master their L2. In addition to the forms of the L2, students can be led to an awareness of the social and pragmatic features of the language. While language as a subject may not interest all students, usually in the course of language learning, especially in a second language (as opposed to a foreign language) situation, students find language at least highly salient and learning a high priority. Motivated students can help create and participate in many contexts within the classroom; in addition they can use a conscious data-gathering approach outside the classroom to provide additional language to study.

Such an approach might be implemented by observation, analysis, planning and practice, production, and processing. These are common features in many classroom presentations. Students, for example, listen to a tape of a short social encounter, study relevant language forms, and practice short dialogues. The inclusion of planning interactions and later processing, or discussing, them, adds significantly to the exercise of both linguistic and metalinguistic skills and is particularly appropriate to the acquisition of pragmatics with its strong social component. Students engaged in collecting material outside the classroom might, for example, engage in personal interactions, collect written material, or tape conversations or material from radio or television. Of course the material could be used in a variety of ways, but the importance of context, discussed above, would point to the advantages of an inductive approach to the data and attention to

the contexts of the situations in which it was collected. Students might also engage in contrastive analyses of the features under discussion in their L1s and L2s; in multi-language classrooms this could be the subject of class presentations. Just as the cross-cultural comparisons of the CCSARP has made researchers more aware of the subtleties of cultural and linguistic phenomena such as politeness, linguistic analysis could be of real benefit to students (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989b).

I am citing the active metapragmatic role children take in their L1 acquisition (Snow et al., 1990; Becker, 1991) and the importance of attentional control to adult learners (Bialystok 1993), in support of explicit teaching of pragmatics and the inclusion of pragmatic components in syntax, semantics and phonology. The development of materials and investigation of their effectiveness will make a practical contribution to language teaching. By creating real contexts for language use, with the support of previous analysis and practice and follow-up processing, teachers can enable students to control the attention they give to the current learning tasks. Tapping into students' metalinguistic, and specifically metapragmatic, awareness facilitates this control which Bialystok contends is the adult learner's main task. In addition, consciousness-raising may help students to become aware of strategies they use in learning and practicing language skills and the relative efficacy of these strategies.

Finally, we should note that *teachers* will benefit from a greater emphasis on linguistics in their training to enable them to carry out some of these suggestions (Hoffman-Hicks, 1994). Better background in this area will help teachers evaluate and

develop materials, make practical use of research findings, and conduct classroom research. For example, Cohen and Olshtain (1993) point out that production of speech acts can be quite demanding and suggest teachers "may wish to devise a means for finding out more about the processes involved in producing the resulting utterances."

Target Repertoire

The final pedagogical question I would like to raise is that of the "target repertoire" (Breen and Candlin, 1980). What it comes down to for pragmatics is Rose's (1994a) question: Whose system is being taught? This question must be answered before we can answer other important pedagogical questions: What should be taught? What is the "target repertoire"? This question might arise for any second language, but is under active discussion in the field of English teaching for several reasons. First, there are a number of recognized varieties of native and nativized English around the world. Second, many speakers of ESL do not use English primarily to communicate with native speakers, lessening the profile of NS varieties and highlighting the problem of mutually comprehensible taught varieties. Finally, the phenomenal growth of English as a world language strains the available human and financial resources, requiring educators and policy makers to focus on the most efficient use of personnel, time, and money.

While Johnson (1990) speaks of "*an* acceptable, teachable variety" (italics mine), I don't believe that one target repertoire will work for all learners. As English is used for more purposes by more people (many of whom seldom interact with NSs) it is subject to

the same forces of language change that bring about different dialects and varieties of English among native speakers (Lowenberg, 1993), creating a number of Englishes. At the same time, decisions about what to teach must be made every day, on every level, from the classroom teacher formulating objectives and choosing activities, through program directors designing curricula to government officials allocating funds for language education programs. These facts require that educators consider carefully the real needs of learners and the role English will play in meeting those needs and use these considerations in making their decisions, without too slavish an adherence to a monolithic (and somewhat mythic) "standard." We have already raised the question of the legitimacy of NS language behavior as the only comparative norm, and illustrated that we need to know more about the real language behavior of proficient L2 speakers. These more global considerations support that conclusion.

Research Questions

The field of IL pragmatics research can benefit from the addition of more natural and ethnographic data and data collection methods and more descriptive analyses in at least two ways. First, such an approach to IL will allow any developmental trends that may be present to emerge without the potentially overshadowing influence of comparisons with either L1 or NS data. While these are essential for comparative pragmatics and the influence of the comparative approach is considerable, there may be other ways in which IL data can be explored, other questions they can answer. Therefore, ways should be

sought to examine the phenomenon of IL from a different perspective. Second, broader research would provide a good background and useful data base from which to construct a picture of proficient L2 speakers' language. By proficient speakers, I mean those beyond the intermediate to advanced levels commonly used as subjects to date: we need to establish a more detailed developmental picture of language learning and a description of the "intercultural style" of those who are adept in two languages and cultures.

This brings me to my second research suggestion which is also aimed at enhancing the picture of the acquisition of pragmatics we now have: more longitudinal and pseudo-longitudinal research will fill in the gaps between the very few multi-level studies and studies involving beginners, and the substantial number on intermediate learners. In addition, the length-of-stay variable, which has been shown to be important, should be more thoroughly investigated.

As has been stated earlier, IL pragmatics researchers could make both theoretical and practical contributions by profiling the proficient L2 speaker. Such research will help shed light on the process of transfer, or interaction between L1 and L2, and in combination with acceptability studies, suggested below, provide guidelines for realistic individual and program outcomes.

In order to address the question of the "target repertoire," or in practical terms, what to teach with limited time and resources, I would suggest acceptability studies on the reactions of both NNS and NS to NNS pragmatic competence. For example, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) raise the question of "too much talk" which they suggest may lead to

"pragmatic failure." There is no doubt that their observation of greater request length among NNS than NS is important, but has this behavior been shown to cause pragmatic failure? It is interesting for students to learn about cultural differences in the target culture, but it is crucial for them to understand what is offensive to those around them and what is effective in communicating their own intentions. This is an example of something that will vary a great deal from one situation to another and that makes a single target repertoire impractical. On the other hand, it might be ideal material for language learners to research themselves in their roles as ethnographers in the target culture.

In examining the variation in acceptability, researchers will be dealing with cultural perceptions such as politeness. IL pragmatic research has raised the question of the effect of negative or positive politeness orientation on NNSs' choice of request forms. We need to know more about the different manifestations of politeness across cultures and how these are successfully or unsuccessfully transferred by NNS. This is an area where observations of natural interactions, discourse analysis methods and explicit discussion and investigation by students and assessment of the results of such pedagogic activities might all be applied.

It was suggested earlier that pragmatic competence be explicitly taught and a pragmatic component included in syntax, semantics and phonology. Assessing the effectiveness of such instruction will offer essential guidance to teachers and materials developers. This is not, strictly speaking, research in pragmatics, but a assertion of the need to include pragmatic concerns in the total picture of language pedagogy research.

This discussion of the acquisition of directives in L1 and L2 has raised several questions: How do children develop metapragmatic awareness? How do language learners process indirect requests? How do we recognize pragmatically proficient L2 speakers? What specific skills do they demonstrate and how do these compare with native speakers? What do NSs expect of NNSs, and how do these expectations interact with NNS pragmatic competence? What are essential pragmatic skills to avoid offense and insure illocutionary efficacy in a given context? What is the pattern of development of these skills among learners? What are the effects of explicit teaching of pragmatics?

In summary, I suggest the following for future research in IL pragmatics:

1. Including more natural data collection techniques and a broader sample population to provide a more detailed picture of requests and other speech acts in total language use.

2. Including more longitudinal or pseudolongitudinal studies to provide more information on the *development* of pragmatic competence over time.

3. Developing profiles of proficient L2 speakers and their "intercultural style."

4. Conducting acceptability studies to identify crucial pragmatic skills and aid in the establishment of pedagogical objectives.

5. Examining politeness orientation (positive or negative) in different cultures and its effect on speech act strategy choices and acceptability.

6. Including the teaching and testing of pragmatic competence in the overall language pedagogy research agenda.

Summary

In summary, researchers in the field of IL pragmatics have clearly acknowledged the limitations of popular research methods and called for more variety, but this has been slow in coming. The reliance on elicited data, and particularly the DCT, limits the generalizability of findings, as natural data have been shown to yield quite different results. At the same time, DCTs facilitate large-scale, situationally controlled studies, which are useful in testing the hypotheses generated by observations of natural data (Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig, 1992). The "prototypical" responses they elicit are well-suited to certain research questions. Obtaining natural data will require creating controlled situations, observing already-occurring events, or analyzing extant data, such as ITA classroom observations.

Sample populations in both first and second language studies, but especially the latter, are quite limited. Increasing the number of languages and cultures studied, the age, proficiency and length-of-stay ranges of the participants and the variety of social classes and racial groups involved will enhance our picture of language use by both NSs and NNSs. In particular, including proficient L2 speakers will give us a better idea where learners at all levels are headed. Ethnographic and longitudinal studies will provide better descriptions of speech events and developmental trends.

The comparison of L1 and L2 acquisition of directives has highlighted two points of pedagogical interest: first, the importance of context, and second, the potential of

consciousness raising. Students need relevant contexts in which to learn, and need to learn appropriate contexts for language use. Supplementing classroom assignments, even "communicative" tasks, with "real world" activities will help address these needs. The well-developed linguistic and metalinguistic skills of adult learners can be used in an ethnographic approach to language study. This provides students with experience in the target culture, responsibility for their own learning, evidence of the relevance of what they learn and usable skills for learning beyond the classroom. In addition, interactive computer software would provide a realistic means to access the large number of variables involved in pragmatics. Additional training for teachers will better equip them for both teaching and research. In addition, they will be better equipped to do the needs analyses and make linguistic judgments required by attention to the target repertoire issue.

In this paper, I have compared patterns of development in L1 and L2 directives. Research shows that both L1 and L2 learners master forms before appropriateness rules and demonstrate general learning behavior such as overgeneralization. At the same time, L2 learners process new information through already-acquired linguistic and cultural systems and operate with two sets of linguistic and cultural norms, while L1 learners progress simultaneously on linguistic, cognitive and social fronts, beginning on the "plane of action," and operate with one set of developing norms. A cognitive approach identifies attentional control to be the L2 learner's main task.

What do these findings suggest about second language teaching and research? The importance of context as the ground from which L1 develops argues for its importance in

L2. Adult learners can use their greater metalinguistic and metapragmatic knowledge in ethnographic collection and analysis of language. Such tools as interactive electronic media will help focus student attention on salient pragmatic features and allow sheltered practice. At the same time, IL pragmatics research can find support in L1 methods for broadening data collection techniques and sample populations, which will test and enhance the picture of interlanguage pragmatics developed to date. This comparison of research findings also raises issues such as politeness orientations across cultures and characteristics of proficient L2 speakers. With more learners of English and more cross-cultural interaction than ever before, these issues are highly relevant to the ESL profession and the whole international community.

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